Hafa Adai!

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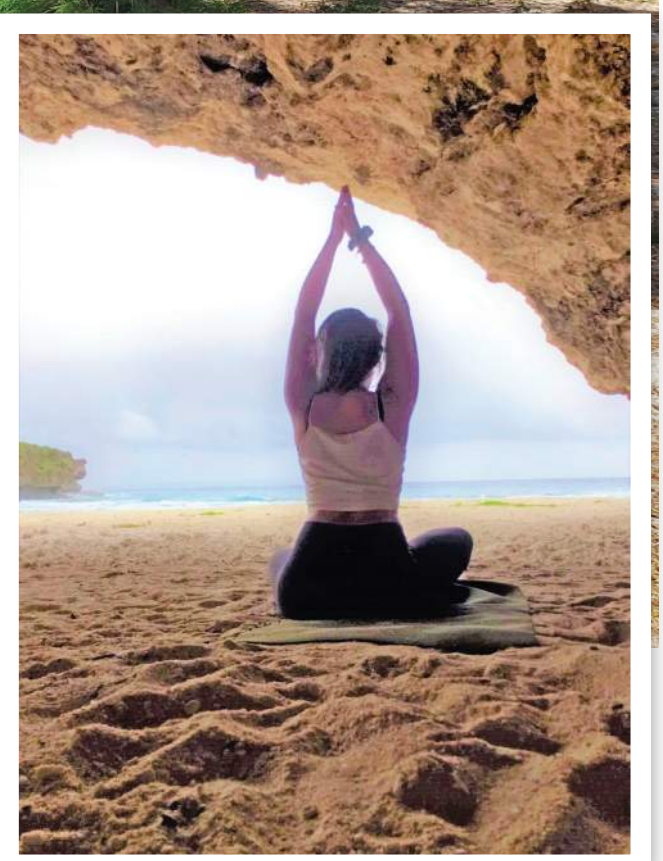
Catherine Perry has been practicing the art of *taichi* for eight years now.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Keeping the spirit of 'Marianas Strong' sturdy



Isabelle Ohman's passion for yoga is her lifestyle.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By **BEA CABRERA**
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CORRESPONDENT

Second of three parts

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to self-isolate and maintain social distancing, here are three examples of people who are offering free classes that anyone can access using a computer, internet access, and willingness to learn.

Catherine Perry

Catherine Perry describes *taiji quan* or *taichi* as medicine for the mind, body, and spirit.

"It is an internal martial art from China that many people around the world practice it for its numerous physical, mental, and emotional health benefits. …*Taichi* is sometimes referred to as 'moving meditation' because the movements are practiced in slow motion toward the goal of improving the body, mind, and spirit," she said.

"The foundation of this art is based

See SPIRIT on **Page 4**

Muña: We are still vulnerable

AT A GLANCE

As of 5pm, April 30, 2020**

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	145	0	145
Recovered	130	0	130
Active	10	0	10
Deaths	6*	0	6*

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14	0	14
Recovered	12	0	12
Active	0	0	0
Deaths	2	0	2

*Total includes a sailor from the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*

**The CNMI has gone 14 days with no new COVID-19 case. Guam goes one day with no new reported COVID-19 case.

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

By **JUSTINE NAUTA**
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REPORTER

That the CNMI has managed to keep its coronavirus numbers low is the result of combined efforts that required nearly 18,000 staff hours and over $7 million.

To sustain that early success, the Commonwealth needs more help: more personal protective equipment and testing reagents, financial assistance, and modernization of the 35-year-old hospital, the Commonwealth Health Center.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña

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Drug proves effective against virus

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER, MARILYNN MARCHIONE and PAT EATON-ROBB**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scientists on Wednesday announced the first effective treatment against the coronavirus—an experimental drug that can speed the recovery of COVID-19 patients—in a major medical advance that came as the economic gloom caused by the scourge

See DRUG on **Page 4**

'IPI struggles after US embassies suspend all H2B visa interviews'

» **CCC commissioner questions designation of Zheng as sole IPI board director**

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has been struggling with the deadline to finish the casino-resort project in Gara-

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NMC's, PSS' game plan following COVID-19. PAGE 2
Small businesses given a second chance to apply for PPP loan. PAGE 5

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The issue of obtaining accreditation for NMTI was the focus of a recent board meeting.
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ASIA
Under Japan's state of emergency, people have been asked to stay home. Many are not.
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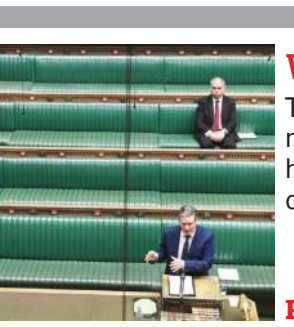

WORLD
The United Kingdom now has the third-highest coronavirus death toll in the world.
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Local

Get tested, save lives

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

With community testing for COVID-19 now in full swing, Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is encouraging everyone on island to get tested.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. started rolling out the drive-thru testing at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport three days ago; to date, 394 individuals have already been tested.

"When you get tested, you are saving your life, and the life that you might infect, in case you have it. We hope you don't have it, but we need to get our community base tested," Torres said.

The governor highlighted the fact that other parts of the world do not even have test kits, that people cannot get tested even if people want to, and added that the COVID-19 Task Force has been working hard for the past two months to secure test kits, and to get the community testing going.

"Do we expect everybody to be negative? We wish. But this is the only way for us to know exactly where we are at," he said.

There are over a million confirmed cases in the U.S., with 147,411 recoveries, and 61,669 deaths. In comparison, the CNMI had 14 cases, with 12 recoveries and two deaths. There are no positive cases at the moment.

"I know that a lot of folks are scared, but if you want to move forward in our life, we need to do this testing so that we know what to do with each other. It's better that we know now, and that will prevent anyone from infecting or transmitting COVID to anybody else," he said.

The governor also said that they worked on having Cabinet members get tested yesterday.

"We will be having our government employees take the test as well. That's one of the requirements that I would like to see before they get back to work, especially those that work with our community on a one-to-one basis," he added.

As for results, the community is being asked for a little bit of patience. Specimens, once taken at the testing site, have to be brought to the lab for the actual lab test. Those who already got tested will be contacted for the results.

To get scheduled for COVID-19 testing, sign-up at https://www.chcc.gov.mp/covid19testing.php, or call (670) 285-1352, (670) 285-1542, (670) 285-1672, or (670) 285-1854.

NMC, PSS' game plan following COVID-19

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Editor's Note: This story is part of the "Game Plan" series that Saipan Tribune *is publishing this week. It is intended to give a look into the CNMI's game plan in terms of reopening the CNMI and restarting its economy.*

Both the Northern Marianas College and the Public School System are considering reopening campuses and resuming classes later in the year in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and gubernatorial directives that are in place.

NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico said that the game plan is a phased reopening of the NMC campuses on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota in the fall semester, emphasizing that student and employee safety are key priorities,

The fall semester normally begins in August, but Eliptico stated that the exact date of reopening of NMC offices and continuation of face-to-face classes is still being evaluated. A big component of instructional activities may remain online in the fall semester, Eliptico added.

"No definite date has been identified for the reopening of campus, but it will likely occur in phases, depending on information we learn over the next few weeks," he said.

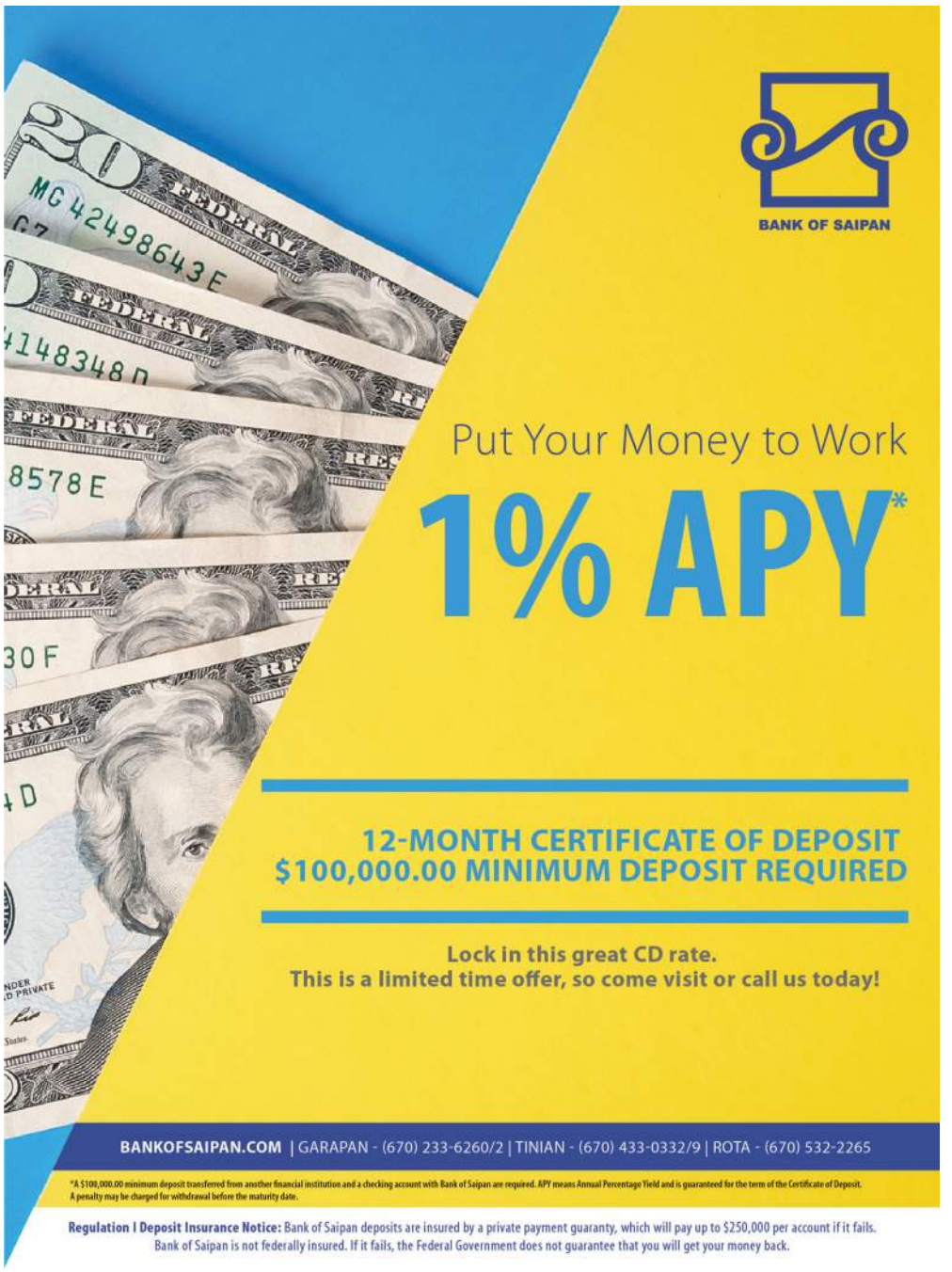
Eliptico said the college will continue to be guided by the Governor's COVID-19 directives and other health advisories to determine what is in the interest of students' and employees' safety and welfare.

Currently, the college's summer semester has already been planned to be entirely online to maximize the effectiveness of social distancing guidelines. The summer semester is from June to July.

The Public School System is looking at resuming classes around December, much later than usual which is around August and September.

With the uncertainty of how long the COVID-19 pandemic will last, PSS has discussed three possible game plans for the next school year. Plan A involves delaying the opening of the school year. Plan B, which is dependent on PSS receiving a budget of at least $19 million, would be four-day school weeks, half-days, and five-hour pays for teachers, merging schools, and shifting as many courses online as possible. Plan C, which is dependent on PSS receiving a $36-million to $40-million budget, is opening schools on time and following last school year's schedule.

Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said the ultimate goal is to continue providing public education in the CNMI. He assured that the PSS administration continues to brainstorm ways to move forward in light of the impact COVID-19 has had on the CNMI.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Kilili's veterans coronavirus bill becomes law

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Veterans in a vocational rehabilitation and education program will now be protected, if their schooling ends because of the coronavirus. The President signed into law legislation drafted by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) on Tuesday, as part of the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act of 2020.

Sablan's bill, H.R. 6262, allows the Veterans Administration to keep paying for a veteran's housing and providing a subsistence allowance through the end of the term, in the event the school the vet is attending closes. The new law also provides two additional months of subsistence allowance to veterans currently participating in the vocational rehabilitation and education, who may face difficulty finding a job as a result of COVID-19's impact on near-term employment prospects.

"The coronavirus is hurting everyone in ways large and small," Sablan said. "My legislation is aimed at veterans nationwide, who were doing their best to build their skills to enter the job market, only to have their work derailed by this disease.

"By continuing the support they were expecting from the federal government, we help these veterans stay on track, so they are ready when the economy reopens," he added.

Sablan's bill also prevents veterans from losing eligibility time for education support, when they do not receive credit for classes cut short by the coronavirus.

In addition to the provisions from Sablan's bill, the Student Veteran Coronavirus Response Act, also recognizes that not every student veteran will be able to make the transition to online learning, if their school is forced to use that system during the coronavirus crisis. Veterans in that situation could also continue to receive a housing allowance. And the bill allows the VA to continue paying student veterans on work-study, even if they lose their on-campus job due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"We cannot let any student veteran lose their work-study payments, have their housing cut off, exhaust their disaster housing stipend continuation payments, or lose their benefits due to school closures during the coronavirus pandemic," Sablan said. ***(PR)***

TEMPORARY CAMPUS
The temporary campus of Hopwood Middle School, located at the Koblerville Elementary School, remains closed as all on-campus classes have been cancelled. KRIZEL TUAZON

Thailand's King Elephant rice now on Saipan

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

King Elephant Rice, also known as Jasmine Thai Rice or Milagrosa, is now available on Saipan at all leading supermarkets, including XO Supermarket.

Exclusively distributed by Long Feng Corp., King Elephant Rice is the No. 1 rice brand in Southeast Asia and worldwide because of its subtle *pandan* aroma, soft texture, and mild sweet flavor that goes well with any cuisine or dish.

Pair a bowl of cooked King Elephant Rice with local favorites like escabeche, adobo, barbecue short ribs, *tinala katne*, chicken *kelaguen,* or *hotnon babui* and the meal will always be a sure winner.

"What is unique about this brand is that the rice is 'long grain,' white, freshly harvested, high quality and 100% from Thailand. Aside from the quality, King Elephant Rice is way cheaper than the other Jasmine rice currently available in the market," said Sophie Xu of Long Feng Corp.

"King Elephant Rice comes in 20-lb and 50-lb bags. Prices start at $36.99 compared to other brands—Umbrella brand goes for $43.99, Golden Phoenix is $39.99, and Thai Jasmine Rice is $37.99. The savings you get you can use for other items that you need in the house," Xu added.

According to Healthyeating.com, if you need energy to help you get through the day, eating Jasmine Thai rice is the best source of carbohydrates for energy. This type of rice also adds iron. Iron helps boost your immune system so you get a good round of nutrition into your body.

For more information about King Elephant Rice, call Long Feng Corp. at (670) 235-9168.

DRUG

From Page 1

deepened in the U.S. and Europe.

The U.S. government said it is working to make the antiviral medication remdesivir available to patients as quickly as possible.

"What it has proven is that a drug can block this virus," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious-disease expert. "This will be the standard of care."

Stocks surged around the world on the news, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average gaining more than 530 points on the day, or over 2%.

Still, word of the new drug came as the U.S. government reported that American economic output is shriveling in the biggest and fastest collapse since the Depression. The virus has killed over 220,000 people worldwide, including more than 60,000 confirmed deaths in the U.S., and led to lockdowns and other restrictions that have closed factories and other businesses around the globe.

The U.S. said its gross domestic product, or output of goods and services, shrank at an annual rate of 4.8% in the January-March period, the sharpest quarterly drop since the global financial meltdown of more than a decade ago.

And the worst is yet to come: The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the GDP of the world's biggest economy will plunge at a 40% annual rate during the three-month period that ends in June.

The latest figures on people applying for unemployment benefits in the U.S. come out Thursday, with economists estimating perhaps 1 in 6 American workers, or nearly 30 million people, have lost their jobs over the past six weeks.

The U.S. unemployment rate for April will be released at the end of next week, and economists have said it could range as high as 20%—a level last seen during the Depression.

Mario Franco, who worked at a McDonald's at a rest stop along Interstate 95 in Darien, Connecticut, for 26 years, rising to night manager in charge of the kitchen staff, was laid off in late March. The 50-year-old said he has little savings and now relies on a food bank and union donations.

IPI

From Page 1

pan after U.S. embassies suspended all ongoing H2B visa interviews until further notice due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, according to IPI vice president of construction Eric Poon yesterday.

The suspension means IPI is not getting any skilled workers from outside the CNMI, said Poon in his presentation on the construction progress at Imperial Palace Saipan during the Commonwealth Casino Commission's regular monthly meeting yesterday via video conference.

As this developed, CCC commissioner Joe C. Reyes and CCC executive director Edward C. Deleon Guerrero wanted to know veracity of a document indicating that a certain Dongting Zheng has been designated as the sole board director of IPI.

Reyes said that Zheng's designation surprised him as this came on the last day of his term as commissioner. "For me this is questionable," said Reyes, referring to a document signed by Zheng as director.

Poon said a number of H2B workers have left their jobs at the casino due to COVID-19 concerns. Their number of local workers has also been reduced beginning last March, also because of the pandemic, he added.

"The pandemic seriously impacts the site's current progress," Poon said, adding that they found it hard to get skilled workers from outside the CNMI to replace the ones they've lost

Poon stressed, though, that construction has not stopped. "We're still working on the tower," he said.

At present, he said, they have a total of 411 workers for construction, as well as 15 management staff. They have 356 H2B workers—114 Taiwanese, three Thais, 121 Mongolians, 27 Australians, and 91 Turkish. There are 55 workers from local manpower agencies. Poon said they're working but they need more skilled workers from outside the CNMI.

He said a lot of things are under considerations due to flights suspension and that, with the closure of the Department of Public Works, Historic Preservation Office, and Coastal Resources Management, they cannot get inspections from them. "So all inspections are pretty much suspended," he said.

When asked by CCC chair Juan Sablan on who is monitoring the construction right now, Poon said they hired three companies to perform third-party inspections.

On the hotel tower, Poon said the building façade cladding installation is nearly complete. "External glazing installation work is in progress. Guestroom interior fit-out work is in progress," he said.

Poon said levels 3 to 14 mechanical/electrical/plumbing, fire protection system/low voltage installation works are in progress.

For the Cantonese Restaurant and Crystal Bar, he said interior fit-out works are in progress, while interior partition wall installation is completed and decorative ceiling installation is in progress.

"Kitchen interior fit-out works are in progress," he said.

Poon said the Resort Hotel or the 14 villas are now complete.

He said Phase 2 construction at levels 3 to 13 at the tower hotel are in progress and is forecast to be completed on June 30, 2020.

Poon said Phase 3 construction at Level 2 VIP gaming and Level 14 sky level started in June 2019 and is targeted to be completed on Sept. 30, 2020.

He said beach club construction started in October 2019 and is expected to be completed on Dec. 31, 2020.

VULNERABLE

From Page 1

emphasized these points during a U.S. House of Representatives' Natural Resources Committee meeting that was held via a live YouTube video yesterday, saying that the CNMI will need more help in order to get back to normal.

At the hearing, Muña appealed to U.S. House Natural Resources Committee chair Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ) to help the CNMI with a "reliable, equitable" supply chain for more personal protective equipment and testing reagents, as well as financial assistance to keep CHCC's staff and contact tracing team going.

She pointed out that health care is unaffordable for many families in the CNMI, since most of the public and private workers have been furloughed.

"We have been vigilant, we have been effective, but we are still vulnerable," said Muña.

Additionally, Muña said that CHCC has managed to fulfill its regular obligations while balancing COVID-19 response, and going forth with future preparations for the worst. "Along with our governor, his Cabinet, the COVID-19 Task Force, and [Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan], we are working hard to safely bring the rest of the CNMI back to work," said Muna. "Help us get there."

CHCC has so far:

- Screened more than 500 walk-in patients
- Screened more than 1,500 patients via drive-thru at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
- Identified and interviewed 215 contacts of positive cases
- Responded to over 700 phone calls about COVID-19
- Overseen the care and release of more than 250 individuals from quarantine and isolation
- Had more than 500 specimens tested (including specimen that's been tested at CHCC)
- Conducted more than 90 teleconsults with patients

"We can now test for the coronavirus on island, an ability that felt far from reach just one month ago," said Muña. "The assistance has been core to our success, but we do need federal assistance to put an end to this war."

CHCC has received 300,000 isolation gowns on April 29 for doctors, nurses, and medical workers. According to a statement from the Office of the Governor, CHCC was set to receive additional PPE's for first responders on April 30.

To date, the CNMI has had 14 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases, with 12 recoveries and two deaths.

COVID-19 in Guam

The Department of Public Health and Social Services tested 112 individuals for COVID-19 on April 29 with conclusive results. Zero tested positive through DPHSS and 112 tested negative. The results include samples from the expanded COVID-19 testing in Astumbo, Dededo.

Additionally, the sailors from the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* have been cleared to depart quarantine and return to the ship. According to the Joint Information Center on Guam the U.S Navy has already begun the process of returning the sailors off-base hotels to the aircraft carrier.

An estimated 700 sailors remained aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* to maintain the ships' necessary functions, and to also conduct deep cleaning and sanitization of the ship's spaces of the past few weeks.

The ship is set to have healthy sailors who spent almost 27 days in quarantine in Guam.

"These sailors have had three negative COVID-19 test results, including one to determine eligibility to depart Naval Base Guam for hotel quarantine, and two additional tests to ensure they are COVID-free and healthy," said JIC.

Guam has a total of 145 cases with five deaths and 130 released from isolation.

SPIRIT

From Page 1

on proper posture, deep breathing, and physical and mental relaxation and anyone can improve those," she added.

Perry got into *taichi* eight years ago and started to offer free *taichi* classes before the pandemic—after the government austerity was enacted. "One of my goals this year has been to share the benefits of *taichi* more with the community and I wanted to start an early morning class for working people. With the start of government austerity on Fridays, it was the perfect opportunity to introduce *taichi* to those interested… to encourage more people to invest time in their own health," she said.

Perry finds that one of the nice things about *taichi* is that anyone of almost any physical ability can do it. The class starts at 6:30am because," first, morning is traditionally the ideal time to practice *taichi*. …Second, it develops the habit of exercising early, which hopefully people will continue even when they return to normal work hours. Lastly, I am investing my time and energy to teach and a serious student will invest the same effort. …If anyone is interested in learning in person or joining the class when we start, they can message me on Facebook," she added.

As a result of COVID-19 social distance protocols, Perry started inviting people to class with weekly online tips that she shares on her Facebook page on Fridays at about 6:30am.

"The purpose of the tips and weekly class is in the event we eventually launch is to provide tips that people can make a part of their daily lives. There is a wealth of information about *taichi* available online, but it is always better to learn in person from a teacher when possible," she said.

James Montenegro

James Montenegro is a self-professed amateur home gardener and a teacher at Dandan Middle School. He specializes in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) class under the Career and Technical Education Department for both 6th and 7th grades and he also teaches about plants and growing techniques.

He started to get serious with gardening as an outcome of Typhoon Soudelor in 2015 and after seeing how many students felt helpless at a time of food scarcity. "At home, I grow my own selection of herbs, including green onion, garlic, basil, mint, dill, and curry. I have a few banana trees, *tres anos* coconut trees, dragon fruit, and citrus. We raise chicken and ducks for eggs and chicks and I am currently planting eggplant, tomatoes, kale, hot peppers, sweet potato, and squash. The home aquaponics system is down but plans to rebuild it are in the works," he said.

"I try to provide tips and some pointers to those that ask. Right now, it is mostly on Facebook or email and I have been out to visit people when they invite me. I am a part of a Facebook group called 'Leaf A Legacy' whose founder is Boni Pangelinan and she has a phenomenal garden that is both art and function. A good friend of mine and someone who I go to for technical advice is Victor Cabrera," he added.

According to Montenegro, he also gets help and assistance from a variety of sources that includes Northern Marianas College-CREES, Division of Agriculture under the Specialty Crop Grant program, and a few local farmers.

"I enjoy working with plants and growing food and herbs. Healthwise, the food I grow (our students grow) uses no pesticides at all. We fight with bugs but our crops are free of all pesticides. …The garden provides another opportunity for kids to be outdoors in a purposeful activity.

"I also share how I have failed, hoping they can avoid those same pitfalls. With my students, I want them to walk away with the belief that they have some control over their own food production, if they put some work into it," he added.

Isabella Ohman

As a teenager Isabella Ohman was interested in health and personal growth. In the fall of 2017, she took her first yoga teacher training in the foothills of the Himalayas. Since then she has continued to learn, grow, and travel around while sharing what she knows.

"…Yoga was a constructive way for me to de-stress from city and student life. After taking classes I felt like I had gotten a full body massage and I became so addicted to the feeling. ...During that time, my ideas of yoga shifted. I had no idea that yoga was so much more than stretching and breathing," she said.

"…Like many people I went through the rollercoaster of being the stiffest person in the class both physically and mentally. …Discovering how liberating it is to be free of tension is what makes me want to share. Yoga and meditation are wonderful tools for destressing. Stress is an epidemic unto itself and yoga serves to restore balance. Genuine yoga is non-judgmental as it is about experiencing the body and this is something I aspire to communicate during class," she added.

Ohman started offering free yoga online in March and mainly through live videos. "These past months being a challenging time, I think everyone should have access to ways to take a guided deep breath. We can foster a sense of home and rest this way," she said.

"I see myself doing yoga online as long as people would like it. I try to honor everyone's requests for classes and hours. Free classes will always be a part of my practice," she added.

Small businesses given a second chance to apply for PPP loan

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved 38,984 economic injury disaster loans totaling over $7 billion. Of this, one is from the CNMI, and the amount, $63,500.

Also, under SBA's Paycheck Protection Program, 1.66 million loans have been approved, amounting to $342 billion. A total of 56 of these loans are from the CNMI, which totaled $12,619,835. These are approvals through April 16.

In a joint statement, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin and U.S. Small Business Administrator Jovita Carranza said the Paycheck Protection Program is providing critical support to millions of small businesses and tens of millions of Americans.

"We have noted the large number of companies that have appropriately reevaluated their need for PPP loans and promptly repaid loan funds in response to SBA guidance reminding all borrowers of an important certification required to obtain a PPP loan," they said.

To further ensure PPP loans are limited to eligible borrowers, the SBA has decided, in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, that it will review all loans in excess of $2 million.

This is in addition to other loans as appropriate, following the lender's submission of the borrower's loan forgiveness application. Regulatory guidance implementing this procedure will be forthcoming.

"We remain fully committed to ensuring that America's workers and small businesses get the resources they need to get through this challenging time," they added.

$310 billion second appropriation for PPP

According to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (Ind-MP) e-newsletter, a second appropriation of $310 billion is now available for the PPP, with a $6-billion set-aside for smaller lenders serving communities like the CNMI.

The money, according to Sablan, is part of the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act, H.R. 266, which the House passed Thursday and the President signed on April 24.

"In the first round of PPP funding 56 Marianas businesses received $12.6 million in loans to pay staff and meet other operating expenses during the coronavirus crisis," he said.

The initial billion-dollar appropriation has ran out, and this new wave of funding provides a second chance for businesses who did not make the cut.

"They now have a second chance, if they act quickly. Three lenders in the Marianas are participating in the program—Bank of Hawaii, Bank of Guam, and First Hawaiian Bank—according to the U.S. Small Business Administration," Sablan added. "The PPP loans are for two years at 1% interest. The loans will be completely forgiven, however, if an employer uses at least 75% of the money to retain employees."

Applications are being accepted since April 27. Application forms are available for download at https://sablan.house.gov/sites/sablan.house.gov/files/documents/PPP-Borrower-Application-Form-Fillable.pdf.

Concerned citizen appeals to legislators for help

Concerned citizen Peter Reyes Muña appeals to legislators behind a glass panel to look into the community benefit fund and help the people of the CNMI during the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation Session at the House Chamber last Wednesday.

IVA MAURIN

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A lone member of the community expressed frustration regarding the community benefit fund at the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation session last Wednesday, and appealed to legislators to help people by looking into this.

Casino operator Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC is supposed to endow this fund but, according to Peter Reyes Muña, "Where is the $30 million? Nobody knows where it is. There are a lot of people suffering out there.

"This is really, really urgent. People are suffering and if you don't hear the suffering, then you should not be in there," he added. "These are our relatives, our cousins, our uncles. …We have to help them. We really do."

CBF is a contractual obligation of IPI, spelled out in the Casino License Agreement, as part of its contract with the CNMI government and the public. Of the $40 million that should have been put into the fund since 2018, only $3 million could be accounted for. With the CNMI in a fiscal crisis, the CBF money could have been used to benefit health care, public education, retirement benefits, and infrastructure.

"This is another way of what we call *putin haga*. *Puro putin haga*, they just streamline the whole thing. You guys are left to vote on it, and nobody knows about it. That is not right. Think about it," Muña said.

He added that not only a few should have the privilege to receive all these things that are coming in from the casino. "People are suffering and there's no reason for them to suffer. You're supposed to help the public. The public is the one who put you in there, and they're the ones who are [going to] vote for you, so help them."

The impassioned plea came after Muña asked the House to postpone the voting on the three nominees for casino commissioners—Edward C. Deleon Guerrero, Rafael S. Demapan, and Mario Taitano—stressing the necessity for ample time and due diligence in such decisions.

Incidentally, no voting was made after the session got prematurely adjourned following an unannounced power outage. The next SNILD session is yet to be scheduled.

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ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION, Plaintiff, -v- AGRIPINA I. GIODA and MICHAEL J. GIODA, DEFENDANTS

CIVIL ACTION NO. 18-0103

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANTS:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated April 22, 2020 by order of the Court:

/s/ Clerk of Court

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Pandemic response in US territories under scrutiny

A committee of the U.S. House of Representatives sat down with representatives of U.S. territories yesterday to hear how these far-flung American jurisdictions are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

U.S. House Natural Resources Committee chair Rep. Raul M. Grijalva (D-AZ) wanted to hear about COVID-19 response from the perspective of the territories. He convened the Roundtable on the Federal Coronavirus Response in U.S. Territories yesterday in order for Congress to help local governments adequately address the world pandemic.

Territories, according to Grijalva, have a better understanding of the "world pandemic."

"The territories face unique challenges based on geographic location, the unequal treatment under federal programs, and the dire financial situation," he said. "The territories have been hit by severe natural disasters, including hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, and now, further weakening that the health care infrastructure and the economies, is COVID-19," he added, and further highlighted the cumulative effect the territories have to experience, in terms of recovery and relief.

"I believe there's more that needs to be done, and that merely one of the things that this virus has provided all of us, and I hope it provided everyone in Congress, is a perspective that as you go through and talk about recovery and relief, that there's a cumulative effect when there has not been enough resources to a territory," he added.

Despite this "cumulative effect," the CNMI is in a good shape in terms of coronavirus response.

Vice chair Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said that, while the Commonwealth was initially slow to recognize the severity of the virus, it has "since have done a commendable job keeping the virus at bay."

In two weeks now, the number of COVID-19 positive cases in the CNMI has remained at 14, with two deaths and 12 recoveries.

"The measures that were set in place are working—the suspension of flights, the quarantine, the shutdown measures, the stay-at-home orders, public education on the need for hand-washing and so on, also all seems to be working, and I have really prayed that that continues," he said.

Sablan also recognized Congress, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and a host of other federal agencies for providing critical assistance to the CNMI.

At the session, Sablan gave the floor to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña, to talk about the COVID-19 response in the CNMI.

CHCC's greatest challenge yet

According to Muña, the coronavirus is CHCC's greatest challenge so far. She said that coronavirus prevention efforts in the CNMI, as well as screening patients for symptoms, began as early as January, with CHCC sending in its first specimen for COVID-19 testing in early February "nearly 8,000 miles away to Atlanta," the result of which came back negative.

In March 28, the CNMI announced its first two positive cases, with 12 more cases confirmed since then. There are currently no active positive cases in the CNMI.

"In the past 40 days, with support from our governor, his task force, and CHCC staff, we have screened more than 500 walk-in patients for coronavirus symptoms; screened more than 1,500 passengers at the airport; identified and interviewed more than 215 contacts of positive cases," Muña said. "[CHCC has] responded to more than 700 phone calls about the coronavirus; overseen the care and release of more than 250 individuals from quarantine and isolation; had more than 300 specimens have been tested, including more than 200 at our own lab and conducted more than 90 tele-consults with our patients."

Muña also reported that community-based testing started in the CNMI three days ago, where samples from more than 400 people have already been collected.

"We have been vigilant, we have been effective, but we are still vulnerable," she said. "The CNMI is uniquely susceptible to upheaval should we experience a larger outbreak. The virus undercuts the power of our social capital built on family gatherings, multi-generational households, and close relationship with our *man'amko*."

CNMI needs assistance

The pandemic also revealed the CNMI's non-communicable disease crisis, according to Muña, and is threatening to tear away the gains CHCC has made in the CNMI's health care system.

"The CNMI government is shut down and is projecting a $65-million deficit. The islands' schools closed, many public and private employees have been furloughed, skyrocketing unemployment, the retiree pensions is cut 25% rendering health care unaffordable for so many families," she said.

Like Sablan, Muña acknowledged all federal partners, with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and the COVID-19 Task Force, for the success that CHCC has achieved thus far.

"Thanks to the support from the governor and the COVID-19 task force, and the federal partnership with HHS and DOD through FEMA, and further supported by the CARES Act, we have been able to secure additional ventilators, PPE, laboratory equipment, testing reagents, established a temporary 40-bed care site, and a longer-term alternate care site," she said.

"We have received help to assess our surge staffing needs and develop a territorial action plan. We can now test for the coronavirus on island, an ability that felt far from reach just one month ago," she added.

Muña, however, stressed the need for continued federal assistance in its fight against COVID-19. "We have an ample supply of vision and determination but we need your help to establish a reliable, equitable supply chain for PPE and testing reagents. We need funding to keep our staff, including our robust contact tracing team, at work. We need support for the long overdue expansion and modernization of our 35-year-old hospital."

Muña said that the CNMI government, with Sablan, are working hard to safely bring the rest of the CNMI back to work, and asked the U.S. Congress for help, for the CNMI to achieve that goal.

PSS MPLT loan dependent on certification from CNMI govt

The Public School System's loan of $5 million that they applied for with the Marianas Public Land Trust requires certification from the Department of Finance guaranteeing the budget for PSS in the next fiscal year.

According to Board of Education chair Janice Tenorio, PSS' MPLT loan requires PSS to provide either a certification from the Department of Finance that PSS' budget is guaranteed for the next fiscal year, a legislation pledging PSS' budget for next fiscal year as payment for the loan, or an award letter from the U.S. Department of Education of the over $12 million from the CARES Act.

Tenorio said the fastest way to get the loan approved and for PSS to get the money is through the certification from the central government.

"I've met with the Senate president and the House speaker has also concurred that this needs legislation in regards to borrowing from MPLT. The other is to read through a compliance CARES Act award letter whether we can collateral, or guarantee, or pledge this loan toward the payment of the $5 million. The other option is to go and seek approval, a certified letter, from the Department of Finance to certify that the funds forth coming for the next fiscal year will be guaranteed," she said.

Tenorio said the MPLT loan package has already been submitted to MPLT; however, they are waiting for BOE and PSS' decision regarding which route they will decide to take.

Tenorio urged her colleagues to defer the current lawsuit against the central government and negotiate for a certification from the Department of Finance since it is the fastest route to get the loan approved and get PSS personnel paid.

"[Let's] sit with the governor in regards to what the conditions are. We would also need their help in certifying us for the next fiscal year budget to pledge toward the loan so we can get it now to pay. It's been four weeks that PSS families have not received their paychecks," she added.

Tenorio argued that PSS cannot depend on the money from the CARES Act to act as payment for the loan since it is still not guaranteed.

"It's all assumptions. We don't have a firm date. We don't have an award letter. Its only through the words and promises from people. With that being said, if we can sit down, let's set a time and date to meet with the Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Secretary of Finance David Atalig," she said.

BOE vice chair Herman Atalig echoed Tenorio's suggestion, stating that PSS employees need immediate relief.

"Let us focus on our mission, to save our employees from pain and suffering. We need to get them immediate relief. Let us seek out the MPLT loan so that our people can get that relief this week. We cannot wait any longer. If we all agree on those certain conditions, we could make this thing happen. This can only happen if we work with the executive and legislative branches. Let's at least defer the lawsuit until our government can stand on their feet," he said. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

United Airlines to resume flights to and from Guam

United Airlines will be resuming its Guam-Saipan service beginning May 2, 2020.

United will operate the GUM-SPN service aboard a B-737 jet aircraft three-times weekly on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

United flight UA174 will depart Guam at 7:30am and arrive in Saipan at 8:11am. The return flight (UA117) will depart Saipan at 9:15am and arrive in Guam at 9:55am.

United is pleased to be able to resume the lifeline connection between the islands in times of emergency, as well as support the transport of critical medical equipment and supplies, perishable food items and mail delivery for the residents of Saipan.

UNITED AIRLINES

United Airlines will be resuming its Guam-Saipan service beginning May 2, 2020, using a B-737 jet aircraft.

This schedule is subject to change given the current COVID-19 environment and travel restrictions in place. Customers are encouraged to check united.com for the latest flight schedule. ***(United Airlines Corporate Communications)***

NAP sees increase in food stamp applicants

The Nutrition Assistance Program has seen an increase in the number of people applying for food stamps.

According to its latest numbers, NAP received 1,048 applications, which is in addition to the over 2,000 applications that have previously been issued.

NAP previously announced the extension of certifications for households whose certification were to expire. The March deadline was extended to June, April to July, and May to August.

Due to the extended protocols for social distancing from the Public Health Emergency declaration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, NAP will still be distributing benefits through drive-thru for the month of May. The drive-thru service will be from May 1 to 15 at the NAP office at As Lito, from 8am to 3pm.

Households that will be receiving benefits will only be in their vehicles and no walk-ins will be allowed. Walk-in service for benefit pick up will only be done from May 18 to 29, 2020.

Additionally, "only those whose names appear on the valid NAP identification card may receive their household's benefits. The individual must have a valid photo identification card such as a valid driver's license or passport."

Drive-thru benefit issuance schedule for Saipan are as follows:

- May 1 Case Records Ending with "1"
- May 4 Case Records Ending with "2"
- May 5 Case Records Ending with "3"
- May 6 Case Records Ending with "4"
- May 7 Case Records Ending with "5"
- May 8 Case Records Ending with "6"
- May 11 Case Records Ending with "7"
- May 12 Case Records Ending with "8"
- May 13 Case Records Ending with "9"
- May 14 Case Records Ending with "0"
- May 15 Open Day

NAP administrator Walter Macaranas is reminding households that are coming in May to receive their benefits through the drive-thru to follow the schedule and to bring their NAP ID and a valid photo ID.

For more status of applications you may contact the NAP office at 237-2801 or 2802. ***(Chevy Alipio)***

NMTI board pushes need to obtain accreditation

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

File photo shows the Northern Marianas Technical Institute office in Lower Base. KRIZEL TUAZON

The issue of obtaining accreditation for the Northern Marianas Technical Institute was the focus of an NMTI board meeting last Wednesday, particularly in how it will help the institution apply for federal funding.

In a meeting at the NMTI office in Lower Base that was also attended by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, it was learned that NMTI had also submitted a proposal to the NMTI board of trustees, in collaboration with the Northern Marianas College, to obtain a grant of $1.3 million for an apprenticeship program. These are occupational training programs that combine on-the-job work experience along with technical or classroom study.

Agnes McPhetres, the chief executive officer of NMTI, said that since NMTI is not an accredited institution, they aren't eligible for particular federal grants. Partnering up with NMC will increase their chances of getting a grant of $1.3 million.

"It will be a submission of NMC, but we're just part of that program," she said. "Since we're not accredited, it is really essential that we pursue this accreditation so that we can directly apply instead of piggybacking on [NMC]."

McPhetres acknowledges that applying for the grant requires many different steps and one of the steps that NMTI has been taking is working with their key staff to come up with all the policies that govern an institution that wants to be accredited.

Palacios, however, urged NMTI not to be too caught up with accreditation efforts. He said the last thing they want to do is for NMTI to be hung up on getting accreditation that they forget "the real core of what NMTI is all about."

"Accreditation is just a program that will open up things for you," said Palacios, and urged NMTI not to be stuck on just working on accreditation but also give equal weight to improving the program itself, "maybe ensure that while we operate this and while we're looking toward accreditation, we need to also work with the efficiency of the program itself."

He added that he's seen many individuals who have succeeded through NMTI's program in the last five to eight years even if it isn't accredited.

"Although NMTI is not accredited, these folks have earned very meaningful employment in the private and public sector," said Palacios. "It's really the efficiency of the program itself that [we] really need to focus on."

Palacios stated that his oldest son graduated two years after enrolling in the trade institute, thanks in large part to the program itself and how it paid attention to the training that students received and how well organized it was.

"We need the resources and accessing federal programs is something that we should take seriously as a great opportunity," said Palacios. "But, at the end of the day, we've got to make sure that we do this in a balance, and look at the features and the needs of these students."

Torres, on the other hand, appears to be getting behind the idea of merging NMTI with NMC. "During the [CNMI Fiscal Response Summit], it was suggested that NMTI should look into merging with NMC. The whole purpose of NMTI needs to be re-evaluated," he said.

A bill did propose transforming NMTI into a government agency but Torres vetoed that because he didn't want it under the Executive Branch. It came around again, and they all agreed that the government needs this now.

"I think that there's got to be a continuation on some courses, and I am 100% supportive of mechanics," said Torres.

As for the other courses, Torres thinks that the construction trades are a want, not a need. At the same time, because he doesn't see the tourism industry growing next year, Torres said, "I love the culinary [program]. They've done a great job, but is that something the island needs for the next two years?"

Torres believes it would be best for NMTI to merge with NMC. If that is possible, then Torres, Palacios, McPhetres, along with NMTI's board of trustees will need to evaluate what is best for the instructors and students, as well as the goal of NMTI, he added.

McPhetres concedes that it will be complicated but it can be done. "It's complicated, but only educators that see how to merge [this thing] can do it." she said.

She added that it will also be better to have one board that will look at the whole educational system as a whole, so that "the Public School System won't say this is mine and NMC will not say this is mine."

"Look at our system, it's a broken educational system," said McPhetres. "We have to have one educational system."

Matson awards scholarships to 3 NMC students

Matson Navigation Co. recently awarded academic scholarships to three deserving Northern Marianas College students.

The students selected to receive the scholarship grants under the Matson Navigation Co. Scholarship Program are Joyce Cuenca, Jamarie Paras, and Jessy Lou Lizama. The three recipients had undergone a highly competitive application process that included several essay requirements and a panel interview.

Paras

Lizama

Cuenca

The Matson Scholarship awards scholarships to three deserving full-time NMC students pursuing a degree in either a bachelor's in business management or an associate of science in accounting during each academic school year. Each student will receive about $500. The scholarships are awarded based on financial need, merit, eligibility, the content of the applicant's essay, and an interview panel.

This was the company's fourth donation of scholarships to NMC.

Cuenca is currently pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Business Management with a concentration in accounting. Paras is pursuing both a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, while Lizama is working toward an Associates of Applied Science in Accounting and Business Management degree.

"The college is grateful for Matson's support of students during these unprecedented times," said NMC interim president Frankie Eliptico. "These funds go a long way in helping our students reach their educational and professional goals."

The purpose of the Matson Navigation Company Scholarship is to promote higher education by providing financial assistance for college students in their pursuit of professional careers, help alleviate the critical current and future shortage of skilled and trained workforce for the CNMI, and to provide current public and private sector employees with opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills, and enhance their career and professional development.

For more information about available scholarships at NMC visit www.marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

Agriculture office in Kagman burglarized

On Tuesday, April 28, 2020, at about 9:09am, the CNMI Department of Public Safety received a 911 call reporting a burglary and theft incident at the Division of Agriculture office in Kagman. Police were dispatched to the scene.

WELCOME SIGHT
People visiting the Marianas Medical Center are met in front with a fully-clad front-line staff to ensure compliance with social distancing rules and other measures intended to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
KRIZEL TUAZON

At about 9:15am, nearby units arrived at the location and met with a staff member who called for police assistance. The staff member led police to the storage area, and told officers that some lawn care equipment is missing.

After a quick inventory items reported missing from the office include one compressor gauge, one compressor blower, one Echo gas-powered blower, one Shindaiwa brush- cutter, and four Mitsubishi TLE brush-cutters.

DPS would like to remind the public to be diligent when purchasing lawn care equipment from unknown individuals, or online.

If you or someone you know has been approached recently by any individual offering to sell you any of these items, call 911 immediately, or if you wish to remain anonymous you may call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. Crime Stoppers pays up to $1,000 for any information leading to an arrest. ***(PR)***

FBI issues alert against cybercriminals

HONOLULU, Hawaii—As of March 30 2020, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has received more than 1,200 complaints related to COVID-19 scams. This has prompted the FBI to issue an alert yesterday to the public to be on the lookout for scams that exploit the current COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the FBI advisory, cyber actors have engaged in recent weeks in phishing campaigns against first responders, launched DDoS attacks against government agencies, deployed ransomware at medical facilities, and created fake COVID-19 websites that quietly download malware to victim devices.

Based on recent trends, the FBI assesses these same groups will target businesses and individuals working from home via telework software vulnerabilities, education technology platforms, and new Business Email Compromise schemes.

The FBI anticipates cyber actors will exploit increased use of virtual environments by government agencies, the private sector, private organizations, and individuals as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Computer systems and virtual environments provide essential communication services for telework and education, in addition to conducting regular business. Cyber actors exploit vulnerabilities in these systems to steal sensitive information, target individuals and businesses performing financial transactions, and engage in extortion. ***(PR)***

THINGS TO KNOW

As of April 30, 2020. All information may change without prior notice. For corrections and additions to this list, send an email to editor@saipantribune.com or call 235-6397 or 235-2440.

FBI alert vs online scams

The Federal Bureau of Investigation issued an alert to the public to be on the lookout for scams that exploit the current COVID-19 pandemic. See FBI advisory at the link on www.saipantribune.com.

Mass testing for COVID-19 starts

The CNMI started last April 28, 2020, the community-based testing for COVID-19 at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. The test is free. People interested in being tested for COVID-19 can request for an appointment for specimen collection on the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. website at https://chcc.gov.mp/covid19testing.php or over the phone through the COVID-19 Info Line. For more information, see link at www.saipantribune.com.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

May 01, 2000

Oil price hike cuts CUC revenues

Oil price increases in the world market have taken its toll on the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation as its revenues plummeted by a half-a-million dollars from the period between October 1, 1999 and February 29, 2000 compared to the same five-month period a year ago. Fuel costs by the utility corporation have shot up 47 percent over the past five months or an equivalent of more than $3 million which CUC has lost since there has been no corresponding hike in power rates. Between October 1998 to February 1999, CUC earned more than $1.9 million from its utility services, according to its comptroller Yenny Tom.

Teno assures funding for PCB testing

Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez yesterday said the scheduled health evaluation on May 8 in Tanapag village to find out people's level of exposure to polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) will push through as Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio assured him that funding will be made available for the project. Since most of the people in Tanapag will be covered by the medical evaluation, Mr. Villagomez said this will be an opportunity to make an overall assessment of the health condition of the residents. The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry will provide expertise in handling the problem while the U.S. Department of the Interior is still looking at the possibility of providing funding for the testing.

May 01, 2001

Congress sees garment sector for itself

Local garment industry officials are pleased that members of US Congress are now aware of the real conditions inside Saipan garment factories despite continuous attempts by the CNMI's critics to malign the industry. Saipan Garment Manufacturers Association Executive Director Richard A. Pierce lauded a recent "Dear Colleague" letter from US Rep. John T. Doolittle (R-California) recognizing the "overwhelmingly positive" improvements made in Saipan's garment companies over the last few years. Mr. Pierce at the same time took issue with criticism aired last month by Rep. George Miller (R-California) purporting alleged "ongoing wage and labor rights violations in factories operating in some of our American territories."

HANMI bats for cleaner isles

The Hotel Association is calling on the government to raise environmental awareness levels to ensure that protection of the natural resources and promotion of tourism go hand in hand. "Tourism is not only about getting people to come over to our islands. It is also about ensuring that our visitors are provided a clean and safe environment," HANMI President Ronald D. Sablan said. The hotel industry leader is taking government agencies to task in light of concerns raised by some members of the community about potential health hazards in areas that may be frequented by tourists.

May 01, 2002

Is your drinking water safe?

Two bottled water companies were cited for their failure to monitor bacterial contamination on the water product they sell, as the Division of Environmental Quality disclosed that it has issued 28 notices of violation in connection with its drinking water regulations. For the bottled water companies, the DEQ said what it tested are the water products before they are bottled. "Just this past week, the Safe Drinking Water Branch issued 28 notices of violation regarding the total coliform rule. Thirteen went to public water systems for failure to monitor total coliform bacteria. Two went to bottled water companies for the same violation," said DEQ public information officer Rebecca Snider.

Private clinic reaches out to Saipan women

The Island Medical Center yesterday announced that it will offer free pap smear and well-woman screening to the first 25 women who would sign up for the program beginning today. Considered as early Mother's Day offering to all CNMI women, Island Medical Center's Dr. H. Christine Brown said the medical program, scheduled for the whole month of May, includes breast, pelvic and rectal examinations as well as pap smear. "All women who are sexually active, or over the age of 18, should get a pap smear and well woman exam every year to look for cancer and diagnose it as early as possible," said Dr. Brown.

New Navy carrier inquiry suggests tough scrutiny of admirals

By ROBERT BURNS and LOLITA C. BALDOR
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Navy is launching a wider investigation of the coronavirus crisis aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, suggesting closer and deeper scrutiny of actions and decisions by senior admirals in the Pacific that led to the controversial firing of the ship's commander nearly a month ago.

The move announced Wednesday effectively delays a decision on whether to go ahead with a Navy recommendation that Capt. Brett E. Crozier be restored to command of the Roosevelt, which has been docked in Guam for weeks. Crozier was fired after pleading for urgent Navy action to protect his crew.

The expanded inquiry suggests the Navy is looking to hold someone accountable for the most severe virus outbreak to strike the U.S. military. It has infected nearly 1,000 sailors, killing one, and temporarily hobbled an aircraft carrier vital to the Navy's mission of countering China's power in the Asia-Pacific region.

The new investigation was announced by James E. McPherson, the acting Navy secretary, who said in a brief statement that an initial inquiry proved insufficient. "I have unanswered questions that the preliminary inquiry has identified and that can only be answered by a deeper review," said McPherson, a retired rear admiral who had served as the Navy's judge advocate general, its top lawyer.

That is a switch from last week when McPherson and the top Navy officer, Adm. Mike Gilday, presented to Defense Secretary Mark Esper their recommendation that Crozier be reinstated, based on the outcome of a preliminary inquiry by the Navy's No. 2 admiral.

There was no outward indication at the time of the Esper meeting that McPherson believed the initial inquiry was inadequate. But officials said that during the meeting, Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, suggested a broader, more thorough investigation was needed.

The expanded investigation is expected to examine communication and leadership actions in the Navy chain of command in the Pacific, to include events before the initial virus outbreak in late March, officials said. This likely includes the decision to make a port visit to Da Nang, Vietnam, which has been cited as a possible source of the infection aboard the Roosevelt. That decision was made by Adm. Phil Davidson, who as commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command is in charge of all forces in that region.

Crozier had sent a note to several commanders pleading for more urgent Navy action, including the removal of nearly all sailors from the ship to protect their health. The acting Navy secretary at the time, Thomas Modly, accused Cozier of bad judgment and directed that he be relieved of command April 2. Days later, amid an uproar of his handling of the matter, Modly resigned and was replaced by McPherson.

Crozier has been quarantined off the ship since his firing and is recovering after testing positive for the virus. The decision to extend the investigation for another month keeps him in limbo. For now, he is assigned to the commander of Naval Air Forces, Vice Adm. DeWolfe Miller. If he is not reinstated to command before the Roosevelt leaves Guam, he would likely fly to San Diego to await the results of the investigation.

The extent of President Donald Trump's involvement in decisions about the Roosevelt is unclear. Asked at the White House whether Esper had asked his advice on how to proceed with Crozier's potential reinstatement, Trump said he did not want to comment. "I have my feelings on it," he said.

Trump repeated his earlier assessment that the captain shouldn't have written the memo that got him fired, but said he is a "very good man" who "had a bad day."

In his statement, McPherson did not reveal what questions he thinks the initial inquiry left unanswered.

"I am directing Adm. Gilday to conduct a follow-on command investigation," McPherson said. "This investigation will build on the good work of the initial inquiry to provide a more fulsome understanding of the sequence of events, actions, and decisions of the chain of command surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt*."

The wider investigation is intended to last no longer than 30 days, according to one defense official who discussed the matter on condition of anonymity to provide details that go beyond McPherson's statement.

The USS *Kidd* passes downtown San Diego as it returns to Naval Base San Diego, Tuesday, April 28, 2020, as seen from Coronado, Calif.
AP

In this Nov. 15, 2019, photo U.S. Navy Capt. Brett Crozier, then commanding officer of the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, addresses the crew during an all-hands call on the ship's flight deck while conducting routine operations in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.
U.S. NAVY/MCS3 NICHOLAS HUYNH/AP

Navy starts returning sailors to carrier

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Navy began the process to return groups of sailors from off-base hotels to the aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt,* which is docked at Naval Base Guam.

These sailors were previously in a restriction of movement in Guam hotels as a result of COVID-19 infections on the ship, and they have since been cleared to depart quarantine and return to the ship.

Approximately 700 sailors remained aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* to maintain the ship's essential functions, and to conduct deep cleaning and sanitization of the ship's spaces over the past few weeks. Now, the ship is fully prepared to receive healthy sailors who have spent up to 27 days in quarantine ashore.

These sailors have had three negative COVID-19 test results, including one to determine eligibility to depart Naval Base Guam for hotel quarantine, and two additional tests to ensure they are COVID-free and healthy.

In order to maintain social distancing between the returning sailors, transportation to the ship includes travel via large buses. These vehicles will be thoroughly cleaned in accordance with recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention standards before, between and after each use.

All personnel involved in the transportation process will wear personal protective equipment, including all bus drivers and passengers. ***(PR)***

The Gilday review probably will address Crozier's concerns that his superiors were not acting fact enough to protect the crew from the spreading virus. Those leaders would include Rear Adm. Stuart Baker, commander of the carrier strike group, who was aboard the Roosevelt with Crozier; the 7th Fleet commander, Vice Adm. William R. Merz; and the Pacific Fleet commander, Adm. John C. Aquilino, as well as Davidson, head of Indo-Pacific Command.

Nearly 1,000 sailors from the Roosevelt have contracted the coronavirus; one has died. The outbreak is the most severe in the U.S. military, which is seeking to balance a need to protect troops while also maintaining U.S. defenses. In recent days a second ship, the USS *Kidd*, reported a coronavirus outbreak at sea. It pulled into port at San Diego on Tuesday with at least 64 sailors infected, reflecting more efficient action by the Navy to address the threat posed by the virus in close quarters.

After weeks in quarantine or isolation in Guam, hundreds of members of the Roosevelt crew are beginning to move back onto the ship in a transition that will take days. According to the Navy's 7th Fleet, the more than 4,000 sailors who have tested negative will return to the ship in waves. The roughly 700 sailors who have been running the ship while in port will move ashore and into quarantine.

In the weeks since the ship arrived in Guam in late March, sailors have been cleaning areas and then closing them off.

Rip currents seen until Sunday

The public is being warned of a high risk of rip currents along east facing shores through Sunday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the national Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, trade-wind swell and wind waves are expected to produce surf up to 9 feet along east facing reefs increasing to 8 to 10 feet Friday. This surf will result in a high risk of rip currents along east facing shores.

The public is being warned that strong rip currents will be life threatening along east facing reefs. If you become caught in a rip current, remain calm. Stay afloat while waiting for help. To swim out of a rip current, swim parallel to shore then back toward the beach when possible. Do not attempt to swim directly against a rip current as you will tire quickly. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai
Saipan Tribune
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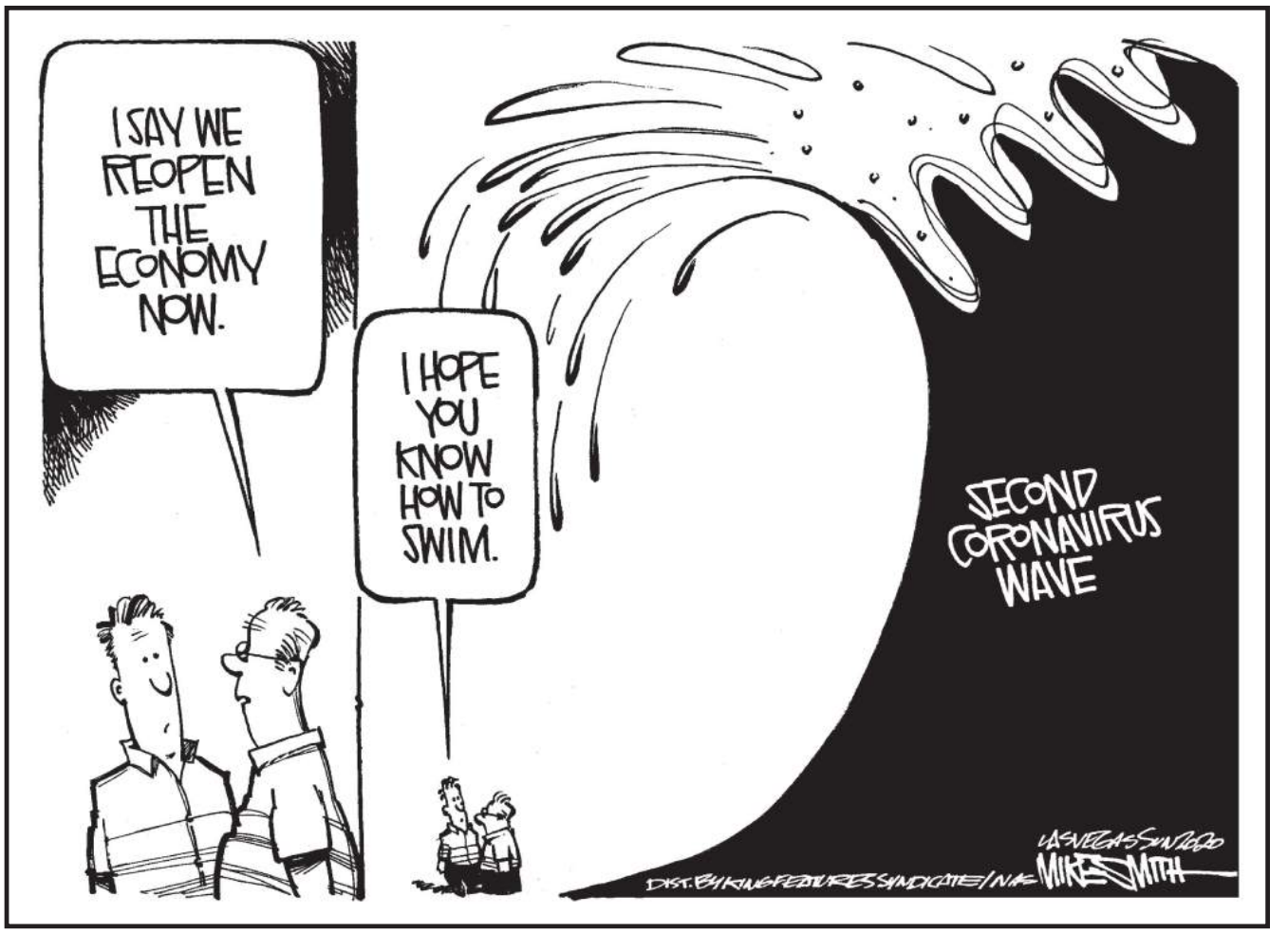
I SAY WE REOPEN THE ECONOMY NOW.
I HOPE YOU KNOW HOW TO SWIM.
SECOND CORONAVIRUS WAVE
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS
LAS VEGAS SUN 2020
MIKE SMITH

EDITORIAL

First ladies Michelle Obama and Laura Bush's joint message for global health amid coronavirus is as pro-America as it gets

When former first ladies Michelle Obama and Laura Bush teamed up on April 18 to help raise private dollars for global health and front-line workers in the midst of this pandemic, you'd think there would be universal praise that something worthwhile and sorely needed had been done.

In this divisive era, when even a worldwide fight to prevent the spread of coronavirus has been politicized, we know it's a little more complicated than that.

Obama and Bush appeared in a 90-second joint segment of Saturday's Global Citizen "One World: Together at Home," a concert event to raise money for the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization. Taking turns speaking from separate locations, they delivered a message of hope that the country and the world will get through this difficult time and expressed gratitude to health care workers and first responders.

The two former first ladies from different parties—Obama a Democrat and Bush a Republican—helped raise almost $128 million, providing $55.1 million for the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund and $72.8 million to local and regional responders.

And for that, some are unfairly criticizing them and questioning whether they see themselves as citizens of the world over being Americans.

Here's the truth of it: When we have former presidents and former first ladies, especially from opposing parties, working together it sends a clear leadership signal that political differences can be set aside to address common problems. In this case, their leadership also underscored the need to curb the coronavirus in places where, if allowed to fester, it would rebound back to America.

It's the reason we were so alarmed with President Donald Trump's call for halting funding to the WHO, over its warnings about the coronavirus and cases in China. At a time when cases are believed to be far from peaking in the world, this is not the time to cut resources to a U.N. agency charged with controlling this global pandemic.

The WHO, buoyed by forward-looking U.S. leadership and monetary support, is needed now more than ever.

It is fair to point out that the World Health Organization can be flawed, and it has been less than perfect in this pandemic. It seemed to give China's efforts too much unearned credit in early January. But around the same time, officials were also warning of possible global spread. And Trump himself has been criticized for downplaying the threat.

But the bottom line is that we must all focus on the common goal: Defeating this deadly virus. The former first la-

See FIRST on Next Page

Bonus unemployment benefit is costing jobs and inhibiting business reopenings

By RACHEL GRESZLER
The Heritage Foundation

Rachel Greszler is a research fellow specializing in economics, budget and entitlements at The Heritage Foundation.

Some lawmakers realized that sending an extra $600 per week to everyone who receives unemployment benefits would cause problems. That's why they tried to cap benefits at 100% of each workers' wages.

They didn't get the cap. But they were right.

Heritage Foundation economist Drew Gonshorowski and I have now modeled the impact of the "bonus" payment provisions and concluded that it will be even more damaging than those prescient lawmakers imagined.

Over the last four weeks, about 26 million people have filed for unemployment insurance, bringing the unemployment rate close to 20%. We estimate that, at the peak of unemployment in May, the extra $600 per week could be responsible for 13.9 million of the total unemployment claims. With more workers on the sidelines and for longer periods of time, this will reduce the nation's output by up to $1.49 trillion between May and September.

In normal times, unemployment typically provides about 50% of previous earnings. But these are not normal times. It makes sense to temporarily increase benefits because this is a temporary health crisis in which tens of millions of workers have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

But it doesn't make sense to create a system in which a majority of Americans can make more without a job than by remaining on the job.

Instead of bridging the gap, excessive unemployment payments will only increase the breadth and depth of the economic downturn.

This bonus benefit threatens to negate much of what Congress has done to try to keep workers connected to their employers such as the Paycheck Protection Program, mandated paid sick and family leave and the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

Keeping workers employed, even if they are temporarily not working or working less, is incredibly beneficial. For starters, it means workers can keep their health insurance. And if tens of millions of workers and millions of employers aren't scrambling to find new jobs and hire and train new employees, society will be able to reopen more quickly once it's safe to do so.

Unfortunately, we've already heard of employees who are choosing unemployment benefits over employment, leaving business owners unable to provide the goods and services they would like to offer.

Typically, workers can't just choose unemployment benefits—they have to actually be laid off. But under the CARES expanded eligibility, workers can quit their jobs on account of COVID-19 and receive unemployment benefits.

Steve Anthony, CEO of Anthony Timberland's pine mills in Arkansas, said of the $600 additional benefit: "As soon as I saw that, I immediately knew it was going to be a major problem." He noted that the fact that workers could make more money unemployed than employed led to "an uncommitted, unhappy workforce" that was less productive. After polling workers about whether they wanted to work or collect unemployment, the company decided to lay off 200 workers and cut production by half at one location.

Harlan, Ky., coffee shop owner Sky Marietta explained how she and her husband had to stop serving customers—primarily health care workers—because they couldn't compete with unemployment. "The very people we hired have now asked us to be laid off," Marietta wrote. "Not because they did not like their jobs or because they did not want to work, but because it would cost them literally hundreds of dollars per week to be employed."

Marietta is right. And actually, many of workers could lose thousands of "free" dollars by remaining employed. Workers in the bottom 25% of earners (those making about $15.50/hour or less) stand to lose $5,000 or more over the course of the four months that the $600 bonus unemployment benefits are available.

With those added benefits available through July 31, it's going to be hard to get people to come back to work—especially because the bonus benefit creates the biggest incentive for lower-wage workers to stay home. And some of the hardest-hit industries of restaurants, travel and hotels tend to employ lower-wage workers. As restaurateur and Top Chef judge Tom Colicchio said: "They're not going to come back to work because unemployment is too attractive."

With up to 14 million jobs on the line and as much as $1.5 trillion in lost output, Congress should fix this disastrously flawed provision by capping total unemployment benefits at no more than 100% of workers previous wages.

Moreover, Congress should not extend the additional unemployment benefits beyond their current expiration on July 31. Economic studies and common sense attest this would only further prolong the downturn and could lead to shortages in goods and services, including those needed to help combat COVID-19.

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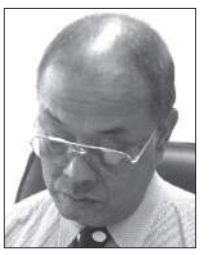
Shifting paradigms



By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

We're faced with quadruple threats: lockdowns, "natting maanee," deadly virus, and stay away!

Magoo said he prefers "natting maanee" because it permits for the usual sigh at sunrise that we repeat at sunset confirming bankruptcy! Then we humbly check for whatever is left in the family purse to regain suspect confidence, after which it's all long yawns and sighs—broke!

The bad times are global and most folks are floored by it. I see in the demeanor of our people's troubled expressions depicting hardship at home. The challenge is woefully difficult, though usually eased by our culture of sharing. It definitely saves the day!

Ownership

We go in and out of the argument on indigenous landownership under Article XII. It may be a grand provision intended to keep a "feel good" landownership for the local people.

But it's good to realistically come to terms with the greater issue: the rights of citizens to own land. It's even found in the preamble of our Constitution. It's a citizen's rights where ethnicity hardly plays a role at all.

You may be from Hawaii, a non-indigenous, but who can deny your constitutional rights to landownership if you decide to buy land here? None! It's the principle of ownership as a citizen no one could deny.

We may feel statutory dictates grants full protection on this score but not when it infringes on the rights of others. At day's end, it's all about the Stars and Stripes Forever!

Affected

The virus has mostly displaced employees in the tourism industry both here and Guam. In the latter, there are about 38,000 who have filed for unemployment assistance. It's an indication that the industry has seen decrease in its activities.

The instant global decrease adversely affected our mini-tourism too in devastating ways. It goes to show its fickleness that translates into far less visitors and revenue.

We may aspire for other economic ventures that are found right here at home. But what are they beyond disoriented intramural speeches?

The viral infection is fluid that blocks the bronchioles—where air passes in the lungs—denying breathing until one expires. Take care of loved ones especially the elderly so they stay healthy. Seek medical help where necessary. Don't play doctor! This isn't about the usual APC! It's a fatal respiratory infection!

Appropriation

The spending of public funds requires legislative appropriation, a constitutional requirement. For instance, a certain amount may be appropriated for the governor's use. He's free to spend it within the approved amount and legal parameters.

Now, if the next fiscal year arrives without an approved budget for his use, then it's money he could spend but stays within the original amount of the previous fiscal year. He can't voluntarily increase it for such is the constitutional authority of the Legislature.

Point

The appropriation of funds is a constitutional requirement before any spending is undertaken. Let's use the KISS concept to keep everybody happily constitutional.

Accountability

Whatever we spend in public funds must be accounted for so taxpayers know where their tax contributions are spent. It's a constitutional mandate that must be followed. It's funds that come under public auditor scrutiny to ensure adherence to the law.

Pelosi

About 46 million countrymen are in poverty. While they literally struggle to put food on the dinner table, Speaker Nancy Pelosi boasts of her gourmet ice cream she stashes in her $24,000 refrigerator.

Her lifestyle keeps her from seeing ordinary fellow countrymen outside her fenced luxury home. It brings into focus how she represents the million of destitute folks across the golden state. Mind boggling in every sense of the word. Does she even understand what poverty is about?

Biden

Joe has problems with gaffes his consultants are now struggling to keep him from the national press. The more the 76 year-old talks the more he shows he's probably sliding into dementia.

Among prospects though Joe has the best credentials having been around DC for over forty years. It's just that he even confuses simple geography, e.g., not sure if he's in Idaho or Ohio.

Joe sounds as though he's the Dems' presumptive presidential candidate. Not quite and not until the issue is decided by the party around August or June at a convention.

Policy

The approval of laws is intended to help improve the quality of life of people in the community. It's the constitutional duty. Have you done anything that factually upgraded the livelihood of your people? Can you name one?

Overwhelmed by the COVID-19 data? Here are 8 rules for understanding the numbers

By RACHEL GRESZLER
The Heritage Foundation

Cory Franklin is a Wilmette, Ill., physician and author of the book The Doctor Will See You Now.

During the coronavirus epidemic, it's easy to become overwhelmed by data—confirmed cases, deaths per million, case-fatality rates, etc. They are imprecise numbers that are often misquoted or quoted out of context. This, in turn, generates political pronouncements, scientific observations and media punditry that is frequently wrong, but rarely uncertain. Obtaining accurate information can be like drinking from a fire hose. So much information, what to believe? Here are eight tips on how to consider the numbers related to the coronavirus pandemic:

All models are wrong. Some are useful. Models are mathematical descriptions of the real world used for calculations and predictions. They depend on assumptions and the numbers entered. Every model is an imperfect tool, some more than others. This is evident from the wide variance in predictions of COVID-19 deaths, from several million to the current figure nearing 60,000, which we will surpass shortly. Politicians use models to formulate policy, but models are always incomplete and wise policymakers must understand this. No single model should ever be accepted as the final word.

Long-range projections are typically less accurate than short-range projections. It's easier to predict tomorrow's weather than it is to predict next week's. Conditions are always changing, and forecasters must account for uncertainty, make assumptions and anticipate unknowable future events. In the coronavirus pandemic different countries use different models and develop different strategies. Great Britain changed its policy midstream when scientists revised their models.

Numbers are a representation of reality, not reality itself. The point of numbers is to help understand the reality of what's happening. A philosopher once said, "the map is not the territory," meaning there is a difference between a description of something and the thing itself. A good example of using numbers but ignoring reality was how some people describe COVID-19 as not much worse than the flu, based on the number of deaths from both. The comparison is inapt; flu deaths are a roughly defined estimate per season derived from multiple projections. In contrast, COVID-19 deaths have actually been observed over a period of weeks, and most deaths are clearly attributable to the virus (though not all). Only rarely has seasonal flu forced the creation of temporary field hospitals and morgues. The coronavirus is clearly not the routine seasonal flu.

Numbers require context. Adjust numbers to the size of the population. California illustrates how case numbers and deaths should be normalized to the size of the population. California is fifth in the number of total cases in the United States, but 30th in cases per capita. The state remains a mystery as to why it has a dramatically lower caseload and death total than expected, normalized for its size.

There is no perfect number. No number is exact; every number is subject to the limitations of measurement. The number of cases of COVID-19 is far from precise—it is an obvious undercount because not everyone has been tested. But it is a useful number for establishing trends. Likewise, some death figures are overcounts, others are undercounts and no one can say which predominates or by how much. But the measured number is a reliable, uniform outcome and helps us understand these trends, which is our ultimate goal. Rather than automatically discarding imperfect numbers as some advocate, try to understand their imperfections when looking at them.

Trends are more important than single values. The coronavirus has proved unpredictable—what was true yesterday may not be true today. It is tempting to pick out a single number and draw conclusions, but a single value may prove to be an outlier. To observe trends, information is more accurate when it is collected over time. A single value is a snapshot, many values over time are a movie.

Beware of cherry-picking. We are often treated to articles with headlines such as "What the U.S. can learn from some other country" or "What one state got right." No two regions are completely comparable—every region has a different population, climate, policy and a different situation. It's tempting to select some place to illustrate a point that does not hold up under scrutiny. Canada is widely praised for its approach to the pandemic, but the Canadian profile of cases and deaths is similar to that of South Carolina, which has been excoriated for its approach. Similar numbers, different interpretation.

Known knowns. Then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld explained the uncertainty of complex situations when he said of the Iraq War, "As we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know."

Among the known unknowns in the uncertainty of the coronavirus epidemic are how the virus is transmitted and especially how it is transmitted by asymptomatic carriers; whether recovery means immunity to the virus; whether viral transmission will be deterred by warm weather; whether antivirals currently being tested will be effective; whether a timely vaccine can be developed; and how many people in the United States actually carry the virus. The unknown unknowns? There are many, and we don't even know what they are.

There are pitfalls everywhere in determining what's happening. When reading about this pandemic, don't be discouraged. No one, anywhere, has all the answers.

FIRST

From Page 10

dies reminded us that we all have a responsibility to do our part.

They are displaying the kind of leadership that is too often lacking in public discourse. Without playing politics or castigating others, they simply supported the important critical work being done around the world to save lives.

For that, they should be applauded and, we hope, joined by millions of Americans interested in beating this virus.

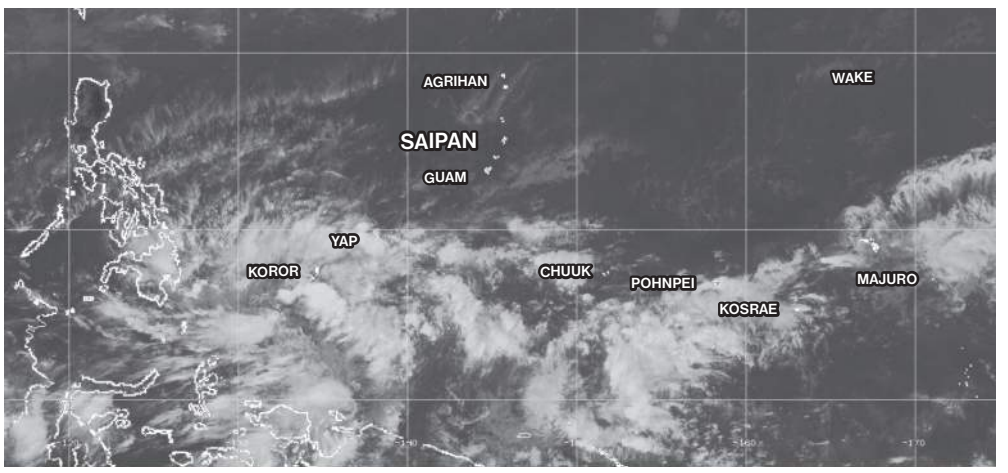
(c)2020 *The Dallas Morning News*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
90° 77°	90° 77°	90° 77°	88° 77°	89° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Isolated showers and east trade winds prevail over the local area this morning.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:15am	9:55am	1, 4, 6

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	7:30am	8:11am	1, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	88° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	83° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	83° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Windy	68° / 63°
Beijing	Sunny	99° / 66°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	82° / 75°
Honolulu	Windy	82° / 72°
London	Showers	61° / 45°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	84° / 63°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	99° / 81°
Melbourne	Showers	54° / 48°
Miami	Sunny	83° / 69°
New York	Rain	65° / 54°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	79° / 61°
Paris	Showers	61° / 48°
Busan	Mostly Cloudy	68° / 57°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	72° / 59°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	75° / 51°
San Francisco	Sunny	62° / 51°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	77° / 57°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	77° / 61°
Washington, DC	Showers	64° / 54°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Saturday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Sunday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM
Monday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM
Tuesday	5:51 AM	6:35 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	12:48 AM	12:28 PM
Saturday	-	1:38 AM	1:27 PM
Sunday	-	2:27 AM	2:26 PM
Monday	-	3:13 AM	3:26 PM
Tuesday	-	3:58 AM	4:25 PM

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
2:58 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.87
8:37 AM	LOW TIDE	1.35
12:41 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.63
8:17 PM	LOW TIDE	0.09

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E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
- ***Cashier & Customer Service***
  Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 664-4282
  Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-(855)-729-2282

Department of Finance
- ***Division of Revenue & Taxation***
  CASHIER ONLY
  Monday - Friday
  7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
  Tel: (670) 664-1000
- ***Division of Customs Services***
  - ***Airport:*** OPEN DAILY
    8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
  - ***Seaport:*** Monday - Friday
    8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
  - ***Chalan Kanoa Post Office:***
    Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
    Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Department of Public Lands
- CASHIER ONLY
  Monday - Thursday
  9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
  Tel: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54

Saipan Zoning Office
- *Available via phone only*
  Monday - Thursday
  7:30 AM - 11:30 AM
  Tel: (670) 234-9661/2/3
  Email: yubert.alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
  Call or email for more information

Department of Public Works
- ***Solid Waste Management Division***
  - ***Lower Base Transfer Station & Marpi Landfill***
    Open all week except Wednesday
    7:30 AM - 1:00 PM
    Tel: (670) 322-2745

CNMI State Medicaid Agency
- Eligibility staff via phone only
  Tuesday - Thursday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 664-4880/4882
  Accepting applications and supporting documents via drop-box at Medicaid Office. Medicaid application & renewal/ redetermination forms must be original. Applications/forms available for pick up next to the drop-box or online at: www.medicaid.cnmi.mp

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- *Available via phone or email only on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from*
  9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 322-6537/38
  Email: maryann@ovrgov.net

Office of the Attorney General
- ***Civil & Criminal Divisions***
  Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600

Office of the Public Defender
- Monday - Friday
  9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 234-6503

SOCIAL DISTANCING TO BE IMPLEMENTED AT ALL OFFICES

GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE HOTLINE TEL: (670) 287-0046
FOLLOW US @GOVERNORCNMI FOR THE LATEST NEWS & UPDATES

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

- ***Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)***
  Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
  Tel: (670) 287-1475
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  8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

  Application Pick Up: Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

  Application Submission:
  Anytime via Drop-Box

  Application Inquiries:
  Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802

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Business

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Green Flash Dive specializes on hydrostatic testing to ensure strength and refill of scuba tanks.

Green Flash Dive:

Safety first is always our mentality

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Green Flash Dive owners Rhea and Joey McDoulett make scuba diving safer in the CNMI.

Green Flash Dive Inc. opened in 2017 and offers hydrotastic test, a way where air tanks can be tested for strength and refill. Since the CNMI is a popular scuba diving destination, the dive shop found a niche and made scuba diving a safer sport or hobby to get into.

Since the quasi-lockdown of the islands, no tourists have been coming that brought the diving industry to a complete standstill.

"Most operators on island only provide services to tourists. As there are no tourists, the opportunities for the dive shops have been cut practically to zero… we have always been a business focused on providing services to our local divers," said owner Rhea McDoulett.

"We have been fortunate to serve also local divers as well as providing services to the diving shops needing to service equipment while there are no customers…we have continued operations, except for a brief one-day pause when we understood there were no beaches open to the public," she added.

Green Flash Dive currently offers airfills, equipment rental, equipment sales, servicing of equipment, hydrotesting, and inspection of cylinders.

Even though Green Flash Dive has a limited client base at the moment, safety first will always be its mentality, according to owner Joey McDoulett.

"We focus on providing additional disinfection procedures to eliminate any risk of cross-contamination in our equipment. We maintain appropriate distancing between ourselves and our customers as well as between customers," he said.

"We wipe all incoming and outgoing equipment with disinfectant wipes. We soak all used rental equipment in a chlorine bleach solution for 30 minutes, and wipe all exposed surfaces with disinfectant," he added

Their immediate plans include reaching out to the community and create interest in local diving. "We have not been able to even during this pandemic…we will begin an outreach program to generate a strong local diving group," said Rhea McDoulett.

She continued that the deep disinfection of their rental equipment will continue. "We just hope social distancing isn't something that has to continue. A handshake is still important to us."

Green Flash Dive is open Monday-Friday from 7am to 1pm. For more information, call (670) 233-3243 or reach them through Facebook: Green Flash Dive and their website: greenflashdive.com.

Economists agree: No quick rebound from recession is likely

WASHINGTON (AP)—Devastated by the coronavirus, the U.S. economy is sinking. And the plunge is accelerating.

Now, as some businesses in a few states start to trickle back to work, hopes are beginning to arise that the economy, damaged as it is, might be poised to rebound by the second half of the year. If more employees and consumers were to gradually return to working and spending, the idea goes, the economy might be able to mount a sharp comeback.

Yet most economists have the same response: Keep such expectations in check.

Among their concerns is that the coronavirus could flare up again after the economy is re-opened, forcing reopened businesses to shut down again. Another is that people—employees and consumers alike—will remain too wary of contracting the coronavirus to return to anything resembling normal economic behavior. If that were the case, no meaningful economic recovery would likely take hold.

"The virus has done a lot of damage to the economy, and there is just so much uncertainty now," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics.

The U.S. economy shrank at a 4.8% annual rate in the January-March quarter, the government estimated Wednesday, as the coronavirus pandemic shut down much of the country and began triggering a recession that will end the longest expansion on record.

Yet the drop in the first quarter will be only a precursor of a far grimmer report to come on the current April-June period, with business shutdowns and layoffs striking with devastating force. With much of the economy paralyzed, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that economic activity will plunge this quarter at a 40% annual rate.

That would be, by a breathtaking margin, the bleakest quarter since such records were first compiled in 1947. It would be four times the size of the worst quarterly contraction on record set in 1958.

Brazil leaves its many poor hanging amid coronavirus surge

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Work had already dried up for Ivanilson Gervásio when the coronavirus first emerged in Brazil in late February. As cases now surge amid a simultaneous implosion of Latin America's largest economy, hope of finding a job is gone, forcing Gervásio to line up for hours outside a state-owned bank for a $110 monthly government handout.

His goal was to buy beef to feed his 6-year-old daughter, who hasn't had it for a month.

Multitudes of destitute Brazilians like Gervásio face bureaucratic delays in getting assistance, amid fraud and a disjointed emergency response by federal officials. Authorities even launched a cell phone app for the payouts, although many people have only rudimentary mobile devices.

So Gervásio, like many Brazilians, had to leave home amid a lockdown aimed at halting the spread of the virus and go to a Caixa Economica Federal bank.

As crowds swarmed the bank's branches across the country, President Jair Bolsonaro was hit with increasing criticism for a slow response in helping the poorest during the crisis.

He already had been slammed by the left and the right for downplaying the health risk and for delaying a rescue of the economy.

The coronavirus has killed more than 5,400 people in Brazil, the most in Latin America, but even local policymakers admit the toll is much higher. They expect the deaths to peak sometime in May.

Big lines emerged across the country on Monday after the emergency aid announced at the start of April was finally freed up. The aid package will help as many as 24 million citizens working in the informal economy without any benefits, representing more than 10 percent of the population.

Gervásio, wearing an improvised black and yellow mask, was typical of the would-be recipients: He doesn't have a bank account and barely understands the aid distribution app. Unemployed for six years and getting by on odd jobs, he had to use a friend's phone to register for the benefit.

"There's no food at home," said Gervásio, tears welling as he described depending on neighbors for food. "We are not afraid of the coronavirus, but starvation is cruel."

In the same line was manicurist Maiara Sales, 31, who left her disabled 5-year-old son at home to go to the bank to report that someone had stolen her identity and her first $110 payment.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
24,633.86	2,939.51	8,914.71
+532.31	+76.12	+306.98
2.21%	2.66%	3.57%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.5233	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7501	Russian Ruble	72.6619
British Pound	0.8014	Indian Rupee	74.3607	Singapore Dollar	1.4093
Canadian Dollar	1.3866	Japanese Yen	106.4790	South Korean Won	1192.62
Chinese Yuan	6.9437	Malaysian Ringgit	4.2674	Swiss Franc	0.9739
Euro	0.9200	New Zealand Dollar	1.6264	Taiwan Dollar	29.2306
		Philippine Peso	49.4320	Thailand Baht	32.3300

Nation

America First meets global pandemic, testing Trump worldview

AP
President Donald Trump attends a meeting about the coronavirus with Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards in the Oval Office of the White House, Wednesday, April 29, 2020, in Washington.

When terrorists struck the United States on Sept. 11, Nicholas Burns was the U.S. ambassador to NATO, and one memory still stands out: how swiftly America's allies invoked Article Five of the organization's charter, that an attack on one member was an attack on all.

It was a kinship among nations nurtured over decades and a muscular display of collective defense that has defined much of the post World War II era. It is also a worldview that Burns finds starkly at odds with President Donald Trump's "America First" foreign policy as NATO's members and other countries suffer from the deadly weight of the coronavirus pandemic.

America First has been a ready applause line for Trump, but now it is also a philosophy being put to a life-or-death test, with much of the world still looking to the U.S. for leadership and assistance.

Burns, a Harvard professor and a former top U.S. diplomat who served Republican and Democratic presidents, said it was "entirely reasonable and rational" to focus inward "in the first weeks of the crisis in March. The president's job is to protect the people of the United States. ... Having said that, I think it is abundantly clear that we cannot succeed in fighting the pandemic and confront the global economic collapse if we are not cooperating globally."

"The America First attitude is a very fixed set of beliefs about the world and our role in it," said Burns, who is also an informal adviser to former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee. "He thinks that alliances and partnerships weaken us and slow us down. He's not an isolationist. He's a unilateralist. That has not worked well the last three years."

Trump's guiding foreign policy mixed with his "I alone can fix it" ethos has made him an unpredictable partner for America's allies, who continue to struggle with how to manage the president and fortify strategic ties with the United States.

During the pandemic, Trump has been accused by allies like Germany and Canada of disrupting shipments of medical supplies, saying that the U.S. needed them first. But he has also offered to provide ventilators to other nations, both among allies and foes.

"President Trump has done a masterful job in the face of an unprecedented crises – safeguarding the health and well-being of the American people by ensuring our citizens have what they need first – then providing assistance to allies through an historic coordination of international efforts," Hogan Gidley, the deputy White House press secretary, said in a statement.

For much of his presidency, though, Trump has been alliance averse. He has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal and Paris climate treaty while threatening to do the same for NATO. And he has rattled some of the United States' longest allies with aggressive rhetoric on trade deals and military alliances alike.

He has favored authoritarian leaders like President Vladimir Putin of Russia, Xi Jinping of China and Kim Jong Un of North Korea over those like German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Now China has also moved to fill a gap in humanitarian aid in the form of supplies. Trump has become more bellicose toward China, saying that the country withheld critical information about the coronavirus outbreak and would pay an unspecified later price for it.

"This pandemic crisis shows the inherent limits to the 'America First' foreign policy," said Richard Haass, another top diplomat in both Bush administrations and president of the Council on Foreign Relations. "Sovereignty is not a guarantee of security. Borders aren't impermeable; oceans aren't moats. We were vulnerable to an infection that began in Wuhan, and it proves that globalization is a reality rather than a choice."

Had Trump truly implemented America First, he said, the nation would have been better prepared. "A true American First national security policy would have had in place more testing, ventilators, PPE. It would have been more self-reliant. This moment shows that America First is more of a slogan than a reality." ***(AP)***

Debate flares over legal protections as businesses open up

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)— The effort to reopen the economy in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic has set off a conflict at the state and federal level that is escalating by the day over how much legal protection companies should get if their returning workers get sick.

The White House, governors, members of congress and state lawmakers are all getting pressured by business leaders who want to be shielded from potential lawsuits brought by sick workers. They are also feeling heat on the other side from unions that want bolstered safety at workplaces and from the influential trial lawyers lobby, which hopes to preserve legal protections to go after corporations in court if people are sickened on the job.

The issue has vaulted to the forefront of the debate in Congress over the next, and fifth, coronavirus relief bill that's still in its infancy. The safety of returning workers has dominated union negotiations between casino workers and their employers in Las Vegas. And governors in some states are imposing restrictions on the ability of people to collect unemployment if they choose not to return to work out of fear for their safety.

The debate has put policy makers on the hot seat at the same time that they are moving forward with reopening their states.

Utah lawmakers have moved to protect businesses from being sued if a customer or employee is exposed to the coronavirus after reopening, with supporters like Republican Rep. Norm Thurston saying establishments need to be rewarded for being willing to open their doors again.

The proposal passed the Republican-controlled Legislature the day before Gov. Gary Herbert announced the state would allow the reopening of restaurants, gyms and salons starting Friday. The governor has not yet signed it.

Skeptics like Democratic Rep. Brian King called the legislation a "get-out-of-liability-free card."

"If a business wants to get open and make some money, that means they have to be responsible for the safety of both their employees and the public," King said Wednesday. "They don't get it both ways. They don't get to both make money and be insulated from their negligent decision-making."

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry is pushing the Republican-led state Legislature to expand protections from liability lawsuits to manufacturers, businesses, health care workers and first responders. Mississippi and North Carolina are considering similar protections for businesses.

Many field hospitals went largely unused, will be shut down

NEW YORK (AP)— Gleaming new tent hospitals sit empty on two suburban New York college campuses, never having treated a single coronavirus patient. Convention centers that were turned into temporary hospitals in other cities went mostly unused. And a Navy hospital ship that offered help in Manhattan is soon to depart.

When virus infections slowed down or fell short of worst-case predictions, the globe was left dotted with dozens of barely used or unused field hospitals. Some public officials say that's a good problem to have—despite spending potentially billions of dollars to erect the care centers—because it's a sign the deadly disease was not nearly as cataclysmic as it might have been.

Many of the facilities will now be kept on standby for a possible second wave of infections. Some could even be repurposed as testing sites or recovery centers.

"It will count as a huge success for the whole country if we never have to use them," said Simon Stevens, the chief executive of the National Health Service in England, where sparsely used field hospitals have been criticized as costly, unnecessary "white elephants."

"But with further waves of coronavirus possible, it is important that we have these extra facilities in place and treating patients," Stevens said.

In Italy and Spain, field hospitals were seen as crucial to relieving strain on emergency rooms as the disease exploded in March. Those countries rank behind only the United States for the largest number of infections and deaths, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.

Spain built at least 16 field hospitals, ranging from a few beds under tents to one with more than 5,000 beds at Madrid's big convention center. That facility has treated more than 4,000 patients, accounting for 10% of the total infected population in the disease-ravaged capital.

As the crisis eases and permanent hospitals are able to better manage the load, some of Spain's field hospitals are scaling back or shutting down. The Madrid facility halved its capacity and could close in two weeks if infection rates hold.

Spanish Health Minister Salvador Illa said the field hospitals have been important and in some cases "essential."

For all the successes, there have also been missteps.

In Milan, in Italy's hardest-hit region, a field hospital funded with 21 million euro ($23 million) in private donations came too late and was built too far from the city center to be much help.

The 200-bed hospital, put up in less than two weeks at a conference center on the outskirts of town, opened to great fanfare on March 31, but by then pressure on the region's intensive care units was already starting to fall. It has treated only a few dozen patients.

Asia

Many Japanese defy appeals to stay home to curb virus

TOKYO (AP)—Under Japan's coronavirus state of emergency, people have been asked to stay home. Many are not. Some still have to commute to their jobs despite risks of infection, while others continue to dine out, picnic in parks and crowd into grocery stores with scant regard for social distancing.

On Wednesday, the first day of the "Golden Week" holidays that run through May 5, Tokyo's leafy Shiba Park was packed with families with small children, day camping in tents.

The lure of heading out for Golden Week holidays is testing the public's will to unite against a common enemy as health workers warn rising coronavirus cases are overwhelming the medical system in some places. Experts say a sense of urgency is missing, thanks to mixed messaging from the government and a lack of incentives to stay home.

In distant, tropical Okinawa, locals have resorted to posting social media appeals to tourists not to visit, "to protect our grannies and grandpas."

"Please cancel your trip to Okinawa and wait until we can welcome you," Okinawa's governor Denny Tamaki tweeted. "Unfortunately Okinawa can provide no hospitality and our medical systems, including on remote islands, are in a state of emergency."

In this country driven by conformity and consensus, the pandemic is pitting those willing to follow the rules against a sizable minority who are resisting the calls to stay home.

To get better compliance, the government needs stronger messaging, said Naoya Sekiya, a University of Tokyo professor and expert of social psychology and risk communications.

A tougher lockdown would also help.

While the halfhearted adherence to the calls to stay home has dismayed Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike, none of those spurning the advice are breaking the law. Legally, the state of emergency can only involve requests for compliance. Violators face no penalties. There are few incentives to close shops.

The main message has been economy first, safety second: Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has insisted Japan will not adopt European-style hard lockdowns that would paralyze the economy. His economy minister heads the government's coronavirus task force meetings.

"The message coming from the government is rather mild, apparently trying to convey the need to stay home while prioritizing the economy," Sekiya said. Since people lack a shared sense of crisis, instead of staying home they're hoping for the best and assuming they won't get infected, he said.

Three-quarters of people responding to a recent survey by the Asahi newspaper said they are going out less than usual. But just over half felt they could comply with Abe's call to reduce their social interactions by 80%.

People of all ages are shrugging off the stay-at-home request. The popular "scramble" intersection in downtown Tokyo's Shibuya looked uncrowded, but eateries and pubs on backstreets were still busy. In the western suburb of Kichijoji, narrow shopping streets were jammed during the weekend with families strolling and heading to lunch. Pachinko pinball parlors have drawn ire for staying open despite name-and-shame announcements and other pressure to close. Bars and restaurants are ignoring a requested 8 p.m. closing time.

"It's ridiculous," said an 80-year-old man drinking Wednesday at a downtown bar. "What am I supposed to do at home? I'd only be watching TV."

Officials are trying to fight back. In Kichijoji, they patrolled shopping arcades carrying banners saying "Please, do not go out." Local mayors appealed to the government to close the crowded Shonan beach, popular with surfers and families, south of Tokyo. Some prefectures have set up border checkpoints to spot non-local license plates.

"It seems not everyone shares the sense of crisis," said Kazunobu Nishikawa, a disaster prevention official in Musashino city, which oversees Kichijoji. "Many people understand the risks of this infectious disease," he said, but "others seem to think COVID-19 is nothing more than a common cold and don't care as long as they don't catch it."

Abe declared the state of emergency on April 7, as virus cases surged. It initially covered only Tokyo and six other areas but later expanded to include the whole country.

Abe did not ask non-essential businesses to close. But Koike, the Tokyo governor, fought and prevailed in requesting that schools, movie theaters, athletic clubs, hostess bars and other such businesses in the city be asked to close. Most restaurants and pubs still can operate from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m., and grocery and convenience stores and public transport remain open as usual.

AP

In this April 17, 2020, photo, pedestrians wait for crossing street in front of a statue at Shinjuku business district in Tokyo.

China's manufacturing weaker in April as virus hurts exports

BEIJING (AP)—China's manufacturing activity weakened in April as the coronavirus pandemic clobbered global consumer demand, hampering Beijing's efforts to revive the world's second-largest economy, two surveys showed Thursday.

China became the first major economy to reopen factories in March after the ruling Communist Party declared victory over the outbreak. But the United States, Europe and other major markets have yet to lift controls that are keeping consumers from spending.

A monthly purchasing managers' index issued by business magazine Caixin slipped to 49.4 from March's 50.1 on a 100-point scale on which scores below 50 indicate activity is contracting. A separate survey by the Chinese statistics bureau and an official industry group sank to 50.8 from the previous month's 52.

The official survey's sub-index for export orders plunged by 12.9 points to 33.5.

Both surveys showed employment weakening.

"It is still too early to conclude that the Chinese economy is growing again," said Iris Pang of ING in a report.

Manufacturing activity contracted at its fastest pace on record in February after Beijing shut down much of the economy to fight the virus, which emerged in December in central China.

Activity rebounded in March but forecasters warn manufacturers might face a second dip due to a possible second wave of the outbreak, plunging global economic growth and a financial shock due to falling oil prices.

"There is still a lot of uncertainty in the coming months from weak global demand," said Pang.

Plan to use malaria drug in Mumbai slums temporarily shelved

NEW DELHI (AP)—A plan to give the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine to thousands of people in Mumbai's crowded slums to prevent coronavirus infections has temporarily been shelved, officials said Wednesday.

Health officials in Mumbai said that a test to prove the efficacy of the much touted but largely untested drug was still in the cards, but that for now they would follow federal Indian guidelines.

India, which reached the grim milestone of over 1,000 deaths from the virus on Wednesday, is one of the few countries that has pushed for the use of hydroxychloroquine, as a precautionary measure among high-risk groups such as health care workers or people who have come in close contact with COVID-19 patients.

Mumbai, one of the world's most densely populated cities, has struggled to contain the spread of the virus, and has over 3,000 cases. In Mumbai slums like Dharavi, which is Asia's largest, social distancing is nearly impossible. In response, the state government had said it would conduct a clinical trial to test the effectiveness of hydroxychloroquine on slum residents.

But experts pointed to the scant evidence for the efficacy of the drug and the risks it poses, and questioned the ethics of using hydroxychloroquine on a vulnerable population. Dr. Daksha Shah, Mumbai's deputy executive health officer, said that officials would now follow guidelines set by India's top medical research body, and that they were waiting for approval to test the drug.

The state government has now said that hydroxychloroquine—which has been touted by President Donald Trump—can be given only after patients consent to taking it while knowing the risks involved. It added that adverse reactions need to be immediately reported to authorities, and that doctors must sign off on giving the drug to those with heart ailments, diabetes or blood disorders.

But concerns remain over India's policy of using the drug as a precautionary measure. India's National Task Force for COVID-19 issued a statement on March 22 that said its decision to allow the use of the drug was based on "risk-benefit considerations, under exceptional circumstances" and was "derived from available evidence of benefit as treatment and supported by preclinical data."

After the statement was issued, health workers in Mumbai, like other parts of India, began taking hydroxychloroquine. The drug was also given to healthy police officers in the city.

But experts say there is no evidence that the drug is a preventative tool against COVID-19. Even for the treatment of diagnosed patients, hydroxychloroquine has shown no benefit.

An analysis of 368 patients in U.S. veterans hospitals published earlier this month reported more deaths among those given the drug versus standard care.

World

UK now has world's third-highest virus-related death toll

AP
In this handout photo provided by the UK Parliament, Britain's Labour leader Keir Starmer speaks during Prime Minister's Questions, as members of Parliament observe social distancing due to the coronavirus, in the House of Commons, London, Wednesday, April 29, 2020.

LONDON (AP)—The U.K. has the third-highest coronavirus death toll in the world after the British government published new figures Wednesday that include deaths outside of hospitals.

After factoring in deaths in all settings such as care homes, the number of people in Britain who have died after testing positive for the virus has now hit 26,097, way ahead of the 21,678 announced on Tuesday. Until now, hospital deaths have been reported daily, while deaths in nursing homes and other settings were reported separately on a weekly basis.

Under the new measurement, the U.K. has leapfrogged Spain and France in Europe, with only Italy ahead. The U.S. has the world's highest death toll.

The upward revision prompted renewed criticism of the government's approach throughout the crisis. The new leader of the main opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, said the scale of deaths in the U.K. is "truly dreadful" and has accused the Conservative government of being too slow in putting the country into lockdown, in testing people for the virus and in getting critical protective gear for medical workers.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab sought to ease any worries, saying the additional deaths were a cumulative total going back to March 2.

"They don't represent a sudden surge in the number of deaths," he said at the government's daily press briefing.

In spite of that, it is becoming increasingly clear that the U.K. could end up with the second-highest coronavirus death toll in the world, partly because Italy is considered to be around a couple of weeks ahead in the epidemic.

There is also an acknowledgement that the new figures underestimate the total death toll in care homes as they only include those who have tested positive for the coronavirus. Also, the death certificates of those dying in care homes can take a couple of weeks to be issued.

Professor Yvonne Doyle, medical director at Public Health England, said the new figures, which her organization helped to compile, provide "a comprehensive picture, and this is most important for control."

In spite of the grim death news, the trends in most of the virus-related numbers are heading in the right direction. The number of people being hospitalized with the coronavirus has been falling for the best part of three weeks, particularly in London, which was the epicenter of the outbreak in the country. Also the number of coronavirus-related deaths are falling when measured on a seven-day rolling basis.

Doyle said she could not yet say whether deaths in care homes were falling but that "we should know that soon because the hospital curve has declined."

Raab said it was too soon for the government to make an assessment as to whether its five tests on easing the lockdown restrictions have been met. Among those tests are a "sustained and consistent fall" in daily coronavirus-related daily deaths, and reliable data showing that the rate of inflection has moderated to manageable levels.

"We are coming through the peak but we are not there yet, which is why we are keeping our focus on the social distancing measures," he said.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, or SAGE, is due to deliver its latest advice to ministers in the next few days but all the signs are that the government will extend most of the lockdown restrictions from May 7.

Earlier this week on his return to work after recovering from COVID-19, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, said the country was at "the moment of maximum risk." Johnson missed Prime Minister's Questions earlier Wednesday because his partner gave birth to a baby boy.

As virus cases surge, Brazil starts to worry its neighbors

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)—Brazil's virtually uncontrolled surge of COVID-19 cases is spawning fear that construction workers, truck drivers and tourists from Latin America's biggest nation will spread the disease to neighboring countries that are doing a better job of controlling the coronavirus.

Brazil, a continent-sized country that shares borders with nearly every other nation in South America, has reported more than 70,000 cases and more than 5,000 deaths, according to government figures and a tally by Johns Hopkins University—far more than any of its neighbors. The true number of deaths and infections is believed to be much higher because of limited testing.

The country's borders remain open, there are virtually no quarantines or curfews and President Jair Bolsonaro continues to scoff at the seriousness of the disease.

The country of 211 million people surpassed China—where the virus began—in the official number of COVID-19 deaths this week, prompting Bolsonaro to say: "So what?"

"I am sorry," the far-right president told journalists. "What do you want me to do?"

In Paraguay, soldiers enforcing anti-virus measures have dug a shallow trench alongside the first 800 feet (244 meters) of the main road entering the city of Pedro Juan Caballero from the neighboring Brazilian city of Punta Porá, to prevent people from walking along the road from Brazil and disappearing into the surrounding city.

Paraguay has fewer than 250 confirmed coronavirus cases and its borders have been closed since March 24, with enforcement particularly focused on the largely open frontier with Brazil.

Argentine officials say they are particularly worried about truck traffic from Brazil, their top trading partner. In provinces bordering Brazil, Argentina is working to set up secure corridors where Brazilian drivers can access bathrooms, get food and unload products without ever coming into contact with Argentines.

"Brazil worries me a lot," Argentine President Alberto Fernández told local news outlets Saturday. "A lot of traffic is coming from Sao Paulo, where the infection rate is extremely high, and it doesn't appear to me that the Brazilian government is taking it with the seriousness that it requires. That worries me a lot, for the Brazilian people and also because it can be carried to Argentina."

One of eight known cases in the Argentine state of Misiones is that of a 61-year-old truck driver who apparently caught the disease in Sao Paulo and then returned to Argentina, where he died after infecting his wife. Argentina has about 4,000 cases and more than 200 dead, according to the Johns Hopkins tally.

Even officials in the United States, which has registered more than 1 million cases and more than 60,000 deaths, have expressed concern about Brazil.

Florida, which has a large population of people of Brazilian heritage, could face a threat of air travelers from Brazil carrying the coronavirus to the state, Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis told President Donald Trump in Washington on Tuesday.

Pandemic crisis squeezes Cuba's fragile private businesses

HAVANA (AP)—Until a few weeks ago, Julio Álvarez was the image of a successful Cuban entrepreneur. He had a dozen cars—classice Chevrolets and Fords thaT arrived before the 1959 revolution—conveying photo-snapping foreign tourists along Havana's seafront Malecon for $30 an hour.

Now the new coronavirus has hit and the cars are parked, the tourists quarantined in their home countries and the drivers shut up in their own homes.

The pandemic that has frozen businesses around the world has been tough as well on the fragile private sector that has been permitted to blossom at times through the cracks of Cuba's socialist economy.

A record 600,000 people had taken out licenses to operate permitted forms of private businesses in Cuba under limited economic reforms launched by then-President Raul Castro in 2010. Many catered heavily to foreign tourists.

Then first three cases of the pandemic hit Cuba on March 11. Thirteen days later, authorities suspended classes, shut airports and told foreign tourists to stay in their hotels pending a trip off the island. Car rental services and recreational activities were closed.

Since then, at least 139,000 private businesses have temporarily handed back their licenses—permits which otherwise require them to pay monthly fees.

"We are at an impasse," said Álvarez, co-owner of Nostalgicar, a family business launched nine years ago. "We have 16 workers contracted. We can't maintain them. They earned their money and are living on their savings."

It's become common to find "closed" signs on private cafes, bars, restaurants and lodging houses, to say nothing of the paralyzed taxi and car services like Nostalgicar that accounted for some 50,000 of those private business licenses.

Legal entrepreneurs, who first emerged in the tough days of the 1990s following the collapse of Cuba's aid and trade with the Soviet Union, have had to struggle with occasional waves of disapproval from the state, which has imposed strict limits on the size and types of activities allowed, as well as the impact of U.S. sanctions that have aimed to squeeze off the flow of tourists.

"The private sector, especially the most attractive businesses ... entered this already suffering a contraction due to the hardening of the (U.S.) embargo policy toward Cuba, which included the closure of cruise ships," said Omar Everleny Pérez, a local economist. "After the cancellation of (U.S. airline) flights to the provinces, there were limits on people who came."

Although 70% of Cubans work for the state, more than half a million had taken advantage of the 2010 opening to open businesses ranging from small repair and sewing shops to gourmet restaurants.

Off The Wall

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Colorado man wins $1M Lottery jackpot twice on same day

PUEBLO, Colo. (AP)—With a little bit of luck and persistence, a Colorado man has hit the jackpot twice after playing the same numbers for 30 years. Colorado Lottery officials identified "Joe B." as the winner of two $1 million Powerball jackpots on March 25. He claimed the winnings on Friday, KUSA-TV reported. The winning tickets were sold on Lake Avenue in Pueblo at two different stores, about a mile apart, officials said. "Joe B." bought one ticket in the morning and the other in the evening, communications director Meghan Dougherty said. The Colorado Lottery received approval earlier this month to process winning tickets worth $10,000 or more at a touch-free, drive-thru claims office amid the coronavirus pandemic. Winners must make an appointment to claim their prize, or do so through the mail.

Mail fraud suspect named Speedy Gonzalez arrested in Georgia

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. (AP)—After months on the run, a mail fraud suspect who lived up to his legal name—Speedy Gonzalez—has been arrested in Georgia. The 35-year-old Buford man—who shares a name with the fast-running cartoon mouse—was taken into custody Saturday during a traffic stop in Gwinnett County, authorities said. Authorities began looking for Gonzalez after a victim reported in January that multiple checks were stolen from his mailbox in Suwanee, Gwinnett County police said in a statement. Police determined Gonzalez was the one who swiped the checks, then visited a Home Depot to buy more than $3,000 worth of merchandise with the funds before returning the items for cash, officials said. Police identified Gonzalez as a suspect in March, but he managed to elude authorities for another month, with investigators saying he even appeared in Tennessee before he was caught over the weekend.

Rhode Island's not big, but now it can brag a lizard (maybe)

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—The smallest state has some big news, if you're a biologist: its first lizard. A five-lined skink discovered on Earth Day in Rhode Island is not native to the state, meaning there might be a population here, excited scientists said. "This is a huge deal. It's very rare that a state would pick up an entirely new vertebrate species, let alone an entirely new vertebrate group—lizards," said David Gregg, the executive director of the Rhode Island Natural History Survey. A scientist found the juvenile lizard, small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, in South County and contacted Nancy Karraker, a herpetologist at the University of Rhode Island, who confirmed it was a five-lined skink, WJAR-TV reported. The skinks previously have been found to the west of the Connecticut River, scientists said. "This lizard wouldn't be able to swim across the Connecticut River," Karraker said. It's possible the skink hitchhiked to Rhode Island on a delivery of wood or mulch. "We need to find more to really verify that there's an actual population there," said Lou Perrotti, director of the Conservation Program at Roger Williams Park Zoo.

Kentucky mayor finds woman hiding in his home's cellar

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (AP)—A Kentucky mayor said he found a woman hiding in his cellar. Bowling Green Mayor Bruce Wilkerson said he found the woman Wednesday morning after he heard noises and smelled cigarette smoke outside a home he was renovating, WNKY-TV reported. When he checked the cellar, he told Bowling Green police he found traces of blood on the cellar's doors and a bag with women's leggings. Wilkerson saw the woman when he went back to the cellar a second time after the electricity in his house went out, the Bowling Green Daily News reported. He said a young woman with dark hair told him she was "hiding from someone" before she ran away into the streetThe mayor said he doesn't know when the woman started living in his cellar, but noted she did not steal anything from the house. Wilkerson said he wanted to let people know about about the report before "a story would come out that I had a lady locked up in my cellar." Bowling Green Police have not identified a suspect.

Florida authorities warn of road rage among mating gators

BRADENTON, Fla. (AP)—Around this time of year, Floridians don't just have to worry about aggressive drivers on the road—they should be on the lookout for aggressive alligators, too, according to officials who on Friday had to remove a 9-foot (2.8-meter) gator from a county road. The Manatee County Sheriff's Office warned motorists that it's that time of year when alligators, um, fall in love but might not always be so affectionate. "It's gator mating season. This means they could be more mobile and aggressive than usual," the sheriff's office wrote in a Facebook post. A male gator measuring 9 feet, 2 inches (2.8 meters) had to be removed from a roadway after it was spotted "being aggressive with traffic." Sheriff's deputies captured the reptile and relocated him to an alligator farm. Wildlife officials say mating season in Florida begins in early April and could continue into June.

Police: Bandit skates off after Dunkin'

HICKSVILLE, N.Y. (AP)—A robber wearing in-line skates skated off into the night after sticking up a Dunkin' Donuts on Long Island, police said. Nassau County police said the suspect glided into the Hicksville shop around 7:50 p.m. Friday, bought a cup of coffee and then demanded cash while making it seem like he had a gun under his clothing. The man got away with an undetermined amount of money and was last seen heading in the direction of a Long Island Rail Road station a few blocks away, police said. The Dunkin' Donuts clerk wasn't hurt. Along with the skates, the suspect was described as wearing a brown Carhartt jacket, blue sweatpants, red beanie cap and—in light of the coronavirus crisis—surgical mask, black rubber gloves, police said. No arrests have been made.

★ DEATH & FUNERAL ANNOUCEMENT ★

†ANTONIO CEPEDA TOMOKANE

BETTER KNOWN AS "MITCH"
BORN TO LIFE JULY 04, 1934 CALLED TO ETERNAL LIFE APRIL 27, 2020

In his new life, he joins his:

Parents: †Jose Sadao Tomokane
†Dolores Cepeda Tomokane
Son: †Antonio C. Tomokane, Jr.
Parents In-Law: †Manuel Blas Blanco
†Asuncion Cabrera Blanco
Brothers and Sisters: †Francisca C. Tomokane
†Jose C. Tomokane "Boya"
†Mariana C. Tomokane
Brothers in law: †Roman C. Blanco, †Carlos C. Blanco
†Francisco (Jerry) Villanueva
Great-Grand Daughter: †Aleiya Rozae T. Brennan

His spirit and memories will forever live in the hearts of his:

Wife: Jovita Blanco Tomokane

Children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren:
Zelma T. & Ronald T. Benavente: Jovina and Ignatius Thomas Dela Cruz (Miana Dolores) Jalayne Benavente & Rico Camacho
Gina Lynn B. Tomokane: Jourdon Tomokane and Donovan Brennan (Leighton Jayce, †Aleiya Rozae & Vayda Brielle)
†Antonio C. Tomokane, Jr.: Kevin Ada and Surina Reyes (Kolten Bronx), Kyle Weidner and Jami Starling (Oliver, Skyler & Kylie), Tioni Alvarez and Elijah Aughenbaugh (Jahcobi Bryson)
Jeffrey B. & Michelle H. Tomokane: (Brandon John, Abbigelle Joy, Ethan Jayce & Chace Jaret)

Reared Children: Jose C.Tomokane, Dorsha J. Moreno and Ray Anthony R. Cabrera

Sisters In-Law: Orfa B. & Larry Deck
Ema B. Johnson
Basilisa (Sally) B. Villanueva

Caregivers: Juliet Pineda
Jefferson Cordova
Manny Camacho

He will be greatly missed by numerous nieces, nephews, godchildren, relatives and friends.

★ ★

Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, May 5, 2020. His remains will lie in state at Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel, beginning at 8:00 am to 10:00 am. Memorial and prayer services will commence at 10:00 am followed by Interment Services at CNMI Veterans Cemetery, Marpi, Saipan where he will be at a peaceful rest. For viewing and visitation, please observe social distancing, wear facial cover/mask. Visitation will be limited to 6 persons at a time. Your cooperation and understanding are greatly appreciated.

Thank you - Si Yu'us Ma'ase.

Jovita Magdalena Blanco Tomokane, Children and Family

Science & Technology

Apple, Google release virus contact-tracing tools to app makers

BY MARK GURMAN
BLOOMBERG NEWS

Apple Inc. and Google released the first versions of their Covid-19 contact-tracing tools to public health organizations on Wednesday so the agencies can start building applications ahead of the system's launch in mid-May.

The tool set is a combination of software updates for iOS and Android, and software development kits to help developers build and test their apps. Apple released an early beta version of its software update that incorporates the technology, iOS 13.5, while Google is rolling out an update via its Google Play app store.

The first phase of the system will let health agencies build apps that allow a person who tests positive for Covid-19 to input their diagnosis. The system will then use Bluetooth technology to learn who the person has come into contact with and then notify those people of a possible exposure.

Apple released Xcode 11.5, a new version of its software development kit on Wednesday, while Google is providing an update of its SDK to select developers.

The companies also said that on Friday they will release sample code to help developers understand how the exposure-notification system will work, along with more information on which types of apps will be allowed.

A second phase of the project, to be released in the coming months, will have deeper integration with Apple's iOS and Google's Android operating systems to rely less on apps. Still, the first version of the program will require a software update for iPhones and a download from the Google Play store for Android phones.

In Loving Memory of

†Lillian Santos Tenorio

In her new life, she now joins her:

Father: †Joaquin Pangelinan Tenorio
Mother: †Antonia Santos Tenorio
Brothers: †Jesus V. Tenorio
†Herman S. Cruz
†Juan S. Dela Cruz
†Ramon S. Tenorio
Sisters: †Herminia T. Sablan
†Linda T. Kumaichi
Maternal Grandparents: †Juan Q. & Maria S. Santos
Paternal Grandparents: †Joaquin D.T. & Juana P. Tenorio
Sister-in-Law: †Juanita C. Dela Cruz
Nephew: †Jack T. Sablan

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Common-law Husband: Frank Sn. Camacho
Step Children: Rosalie, Enrique/Roxanne, Frankie/Jeralyn, Joseph/Ruby Jean

Siblings/ In-Laws:
†Jesus V. Irene H. Tenorio: Peter/Mina, Jesse/Shirley, Manny/Novelyn, Ignacio/Jane Daniel/Antonette, Joaquin/Rachelle
†Herman S. & Eleanor S. Dela Cruz: Rodney/Yvonne, Gordon/Marlyn, Kelvin/Yuline Jeffrey/Kianah Jose/Yvette, Gary/Doris, Luis/Yolanda
†Juan S. & †Juanet Dela Cruz: Edmund, Michael/Lorraine, Anthony/Jennifer, Alex/Jerricalyn, Marty/Gwendolyn, Beverly, †Glenn/Dolly Jean, Richard
Jose S. & Divina C. Dela Cruz: Ignacio, Anthony, Isa
Francisco P. & +Herminia T. Sablan: Vivian, Paython/Melanie, †Jack/Carla, Jack/Ramona
Edward S. & Lillian A. Tenorio: Christopher/Britta, Andre/Katie
Francisco S. & Yvonne B. Tenorio: Frank/Lorna, Abraham, Vicente/Madel, Brandon
Robert & †Linda T. Kumaichi: Melly

Sister at Heart:
Maggie S./Nic D. Sablan: Juanet, Nicolas

She is additionally survived by numerous uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces, nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews and godchildren.

Daily virtual mass is offered at 7:00am and 5:00pm.

Thank you, Si Yu'us Ma'ase,
The Family

TECH Q&A: Photo sharing is complicated by privacy issues

By STEVE ALEXANDER
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

Q: I use an online Google Photos account to back up the pictures on my Android phone. Our desktop PC also has access to the account. But when I recently set up my wife's iPhone to back up its photos to the same account, I ran into trouble. My phone and the PC show that the Google Photos account contains only my photos. But when my wife accesses the account with her iPhone, she sees both my pictures and hers. What's wrong?

A: Your wife's iPhone isn't uploading pictures to the joint Google Photos account, even though it may appear to be doing so.

The reason is that you haven't completed all the necessary steps to share photos. To protect personal privacy, Google has deliberately made it difficult for a person to share an online Photos account with someone else. Just giving your wife's iPhone access to your account isn't enough. Here are the steps to share photos:

■ Use the "sharing tab" of Google Photos to create a "shared library" or "partner account" (see tinyurl.com/y8es3x44). Google provides three sharing alternatives: Share all existing and new photos in your account; share only photos of certain people (as determined by facial recognition software); or share only photos taken after a certain date.

■ Google Photos will then "invite" your wife to share your online account, provided that she has a Google account of her own. Google will send the invitation to her Google account, or, if she has the Google Photos app on her iPhone, to the sharing tab of the app.

■ Your wife should "accept" your invitation. Now you might think that you are finished. But all you have done is share your online photos with her. She isn't sharing photos with you yet. (From your wife's perspective, this problem won't seem to exist. Her Google Photos app will display both your online photos and her iPhone photos, making appear that both are being shared online.)

■ To actually share her photos with you, your wife must click the "share back" option in the app (see tinyurl.com/yasrpbox). The photos she shared should now appear in the app's "sharing tab," and your Android phone and PC should be able to see your wife's photos in your account.

Q: I recently switched to Windows 10, and I find it difficult to copy photos from my camera to the PC, and from there to a flash drive. The camera pictures go into a Windows 10 folder called Photos, but I can't copy them from Photos to a flash drive. What should I do?

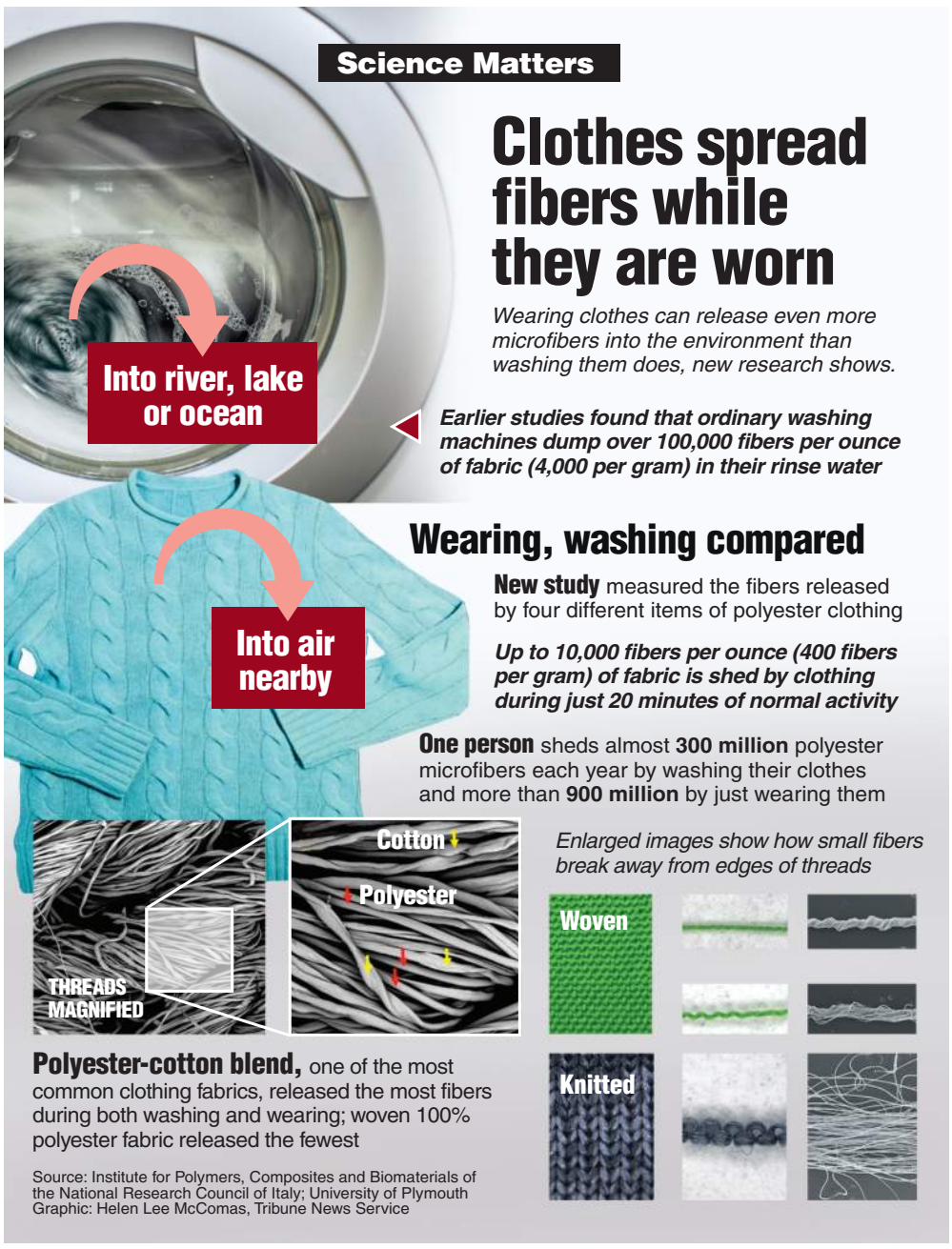
A: "Photos" is a Windows 10 app for displaying pictures, not a storage folder. It displays photos stored in a Windows folder called "Pictures."

To find the Pictures folder, open File Explorer (it used to be called Windows Explorer.) On the left side of the screen you will see a heading called "This PC" with an arrow beside it.

Left-click the arrow and several subheadings will appear, including "Pictures."

To copy the contents of Pictures, right-click it, and from the resulting menu choose "copy."

Then open your flash drive in File Explorer and "paste" the Pictures folder there. Or, you can double-click Pictures to open it, then copy only the photos you want.


Science Matters
Clothes spread fibers while they are worn
Wearing clothes can release even more microfibers into the environment than washing them does, new research shows.
Into river, lake or ocean
Earlier studies found that ordinary washing machines dump over 100,000 fibers per ounce of fabric (4,000 per gram) in their rinse water
Into air nearby
Wearing, washing compared
New study measured the fibers released by four different items of polyester clothing
Up to 10,000 fibers per ounce (400 fibers per gram) of fabric is shed by clothing during just 20 minutes of normal activity
One person sheds almost 300 million polyester microfibers each year by washing their clothes and more than 900 million by just wearing them
THREADS MAGNIFIED
Cotton
Polyester
Enlarged images show how small fibers break away from edges of threads
Woven
Knitted
Polyester-cotton blend, one of the most common clothing fabrics, released the most fibers during both washing and wearing; woven 100% polyester fabric released the fewest
Source: Institute for Polymers, Composites and Biomaterials of the National Research Council of Italy; University of Plymouth
Graphic: Helen Lee McComas, Tribune News Service

Life & Style

‘Trolls’ went straight to homes. Movie theaters are fuming.

NEW YORK (AP)—The most controversial movie of the year is..."Trolls World Tour"?

As innocuous as the rainbow-colored, music-blaring animated movie may seem, the digital release of the "Trolls" sequel has caused a storm to course through the movie industry. Just as the pandemic worsened and movie theaters were shuttering, Universal Pictures shifted the film's release to video on demand, leading a charge straight through the theatrical window.

Universal calls the "Trolls World Tour" digital release a success and suggests it may be the beginning of a sea change in how movies are released. Theater owners strenuously disagree. AMC Theaters, the largest chain in the United States, is signaling an all-out war, saying it will no longer show Universal movies.

While few anticipated a skirmish would come over a glitter explosion like "Trolls World Tour," it has been long in coming. Netflix, Amazon and other streaming services have in recent years broken the industry's traditional theatrical window of 72-90 days (and thus had their films excluded from major theater chains), and the major studios have sometimes been tempted to try their own luck and head straight to homes.

On Tuesday, NBCUniversal CEO Jeff Shell told The Wall Street Journal that the digital release for "Trolls World Tour" has gone well enough to demonstrate the viability of direct-to-home releases. He promised that even once theaters reopen, "We expect to release movies on both formats."

This image released by DreamWorks Animation shows characters Branch, voiced by Justin Timberlake, right, and Poppy, voiced by Anna Kendrick in a scene from "Trolls World Tour." AP

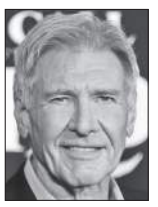
The Journal reported that in three weeks of $20 on-demand rentals, "Trolls World Tour" has grossed about $95 million. The studio, which normally splits sales approximately in half with theaters, pocketed about $75 million of that. A spokesman for Universal did not dispute those figures.

By comparison, 2016's "Trolls" grossed $116 million in U.S. and Canada and $346.9 million worldwide. The sequel cost a reported $90 million to produce, not including marketing costs that likely exceeded $50 million.

Whether that performance constitutes a "hit" or merely an intriguing pandemic-era experiment has been the subject of much debate. Under stay at home orders, the country's moviegoers are on lockdown. "Trolls World Tour" benefited by being the first such release during the crisis. And even in those extreme circumstances, it's made significantly less than the original film did. The rentals may have also eaten into other "downstream" home entertainment revenue sources.

Harrison Ford piloting plane that wrongly crosses runway

HAWTHORNE, Calif. (AP)—Harrison Ford was piloting a plane that wrongly crossed a runway where another plane was landing, and federal authorities are investigating, officials and a representative for the actor said Wednesday.



Ford

Ford was at the controls of a small plane Friday at Hawthorne Airport in the Los Angeles area when, according to a statement released by Ford's publicist, he crossed the runway after mishearing an instruction from air traffic control.

"He immediately acknowledged the mistake and apologized to ATC for the error," according to the statement from publicist Ina Treciokas. "No one was injured and there was never any danger of a collision."

It was the latest of several similar incidents over the years for the 77-year-old actor, who collects and frequently flies planes and helicopters.

Most recently, he flew low over an airliner with 116 people aboard moments before mistakenly landing on a taxiway at another Southern California airport in 2017.

Without naming Ford, the Federal Aviation Administration said Wednesday that a two-seat Aviat Husky plane crossed the runway while another aircraft was performing a touch-and-go landing just over a half-mile away.

John Bolton book again delayed, this time to June 23

NEW YORK (AP)—John Bolton's book has again been delayed, according to listings on Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble, both of which say "What Happened In the Room" has been pushed back from May 12 to June 23. The new date also appears on publisher Simon & Schuster's web site.

Bolton's book about his time as national security adviser was originally scheduled to come out in March, but was postponed to May, pending a government security review. Meanwhile, "The Room Where It Happened" has apparently grown longer. It was originally listed as 528 pages, but is now 576 pages, according to the retailer and publisher web sites.

A Simon & Schuster spokeswoman declined comment Wednesday.

Interest in the book, and its anticipated criticism of President Trump's actions on Ukraine, peaked during the Senate impeachment trial earlier this year when it reached the top 20 on Amazon's bestseller list. On Wednesday night, it ranked #11,971.

Bolton

Bolton reportedly describes an August conversation, a month before he left the White House on acrimonious terms, when Trump told him that he wanted to withhold hundreds of millions of dollars in security aid from Ukraine until it helped him with investigations into political rival Joe Biden. Allegations that Trump pressured Ukraine led to his being impeached last December by the House of Representatives. In February, the Senate acquitted him.

Irrfan Khan, of ‘Slumdog Millionaire,’ ‘Life of Pi,’ dies

NEW DELHI (AP)—Irrfan Khan, a veteran character actor in Bollywood movies and one of India's best-known exports to Hollywood, has died. He was 54.

Khan played the police inspector in "Slumdog Millionaire" and the park executive Masrani in "Jurassic World." He also appeared in "The Amazing Spider-Man" and the adventure fantasy "Life of Pi."

Khan

Khan died Wednesday after being admitted to Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital with a colon infection.

"Irrfan was a strong soul, someone who fought till the very end and always inspired everyone who came close to him," a statement released by the actor's team said.

Khan made his screen debut in the Academy Award-nominated 1988 drama "Salaam Bombay!," a tale of Mumbai's street children. He worked with directors Mira Nair, Wes Anderson and Ang Lee.

Khan in 2018 was diagnosed with a rare neuroendocrine cancer and underwent months of treatment in the United Kingdom. "I trust, I have surrendered," he wrote in a heartfelt note after he broke the news of his battle with cancer.

History of addiction clouds dad's future with daughters

DEAR ABBY: My fiancee has two daughters (14 and 11) from a previous marriage. Their dad, "Brett," was just arrested for his fourth DUI, the second within a year. The girls don't trust him anymore, and their image of him has changed greatly.

We have always encouraged the girls to stay with their dad on "his" days, but when they do, Brett rarely does anything with them, and he berates them. I know he misses his girls, and his siblings have told us the girls need to get past this because "tomorrow is not guaranteed." I understand. I live my life on that premise. But if Brett isn't willing to change, then why should we continue to encourage his being in their lives? He cares only about his image, not the actual relationship with his daughters.

He has a history with drugs and alcohol, and in the last 12 months, he has been fired from three different jobs. This is not the role model the girls need. I know I'm not their father, but it kills me seeing them hurt. Should we encourage them to still visit him? Or do we let them decide? I'm a soon-to-be stepfather who wants only what is best for the girls.

PARENTING IN THE MIDWEST

DEAR PARENTING: When there is a divorce with children involved, custody arrangements are usually dictated by the court. Your fiancee's daughters may not have much choice but to visit their father on "his" days. That said, the custody arrangement can be altered if it becomes necessary.

I agree that someone with four DUIs is not a great role model, and he could be a danger to them if he is still allowed to drive. Encourage the girls to keep you informed of what transpires during their visits with their father. I disagree with the relatives who say they must get past their father's neglect and verbal abuse.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have three sisters. We are all in our 50s and 60s. Three of us get along great and always have, but we have all had issues with our oldest sister, "Lulu." She has gotten angry at us for many different reasons.

When our father was terminally ill, she wanted one of us to live with him in his home even though we thought it was enough that we were in the same small town and went over there daily. Also, Lulu is a widow and not financially secure, and she feels we have not helped her out enough. There have been times we have gotten along wonderfully, but sadly, it always ends in drama.

I miss her regardless of the drama, but she seems to have written us off. She is convinced that she is right, and we are bad for her. Must I learn to accept this and move on? Or should I try to make it right? My youngest sister wants nothing to do with her. She says Lulu is bad for her mental health. Can you help me to finally resolve this one way or the other?

DYSFUNCTIONAL IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR DYSFUNCTIONAL: You are not responsible for Lulu's financial woes. Let her know you are there for her, but cannot help support her financially. I'm sorry you didn't mention whether she has a job. If she doesn't, she needs to find one to supplement her income. Unless you are willing to cave to emotional blackmail and supplement your sister's income for the rest of her life (or yours), accept that it may be time to move on.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT, HOBBES.
THE KIDS TEASED ME WHEN I DIDN'T PLAY BASEBALL. THEN THEY YELLED AT ME WHEN I DID PLAY. THEN THE TEACHER CALLED ME A "QUITTER" WHEN I STOPPED PLAYING.
UNLESS YOU'RE A STAR, YOU CAN'T PLEASE ANYONE.
IN THAT CASE, WHY NOT JUST PLEASE YOURSELF?
BECAUSE MOM WON'T LET ME MOVE TO MADAGASCAR.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

ISOLATION HALLOWEEN...
HOW'D YOU DO?
OKAY, I GUESS.
I GOT SOME TOOTSIE ROLLS AND A CAPRI SUN FROM MOM.
BUT DAD WAS GIVING OUT STRAY TRISCUITS IN HIS ROOM.
THOSE ARE GARDEN HERB, AND THEY'RE DELICIOUS.
I GOT A PACKET OF KETCHUP.
HARRELL
5-1

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

YOU MAY THINK I'M DUMB FOR WANTING TO PUT THIS BACK ON.
BUT EVEN THOUGH YOU AND I AREN'T SICK, I PREFER TO STILL TAKE SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.
AT LEAST UNTIL ALL MY FLEAS HAVE BEEN TESTED.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 YMCA class
4 Prefix for "night" or "day"
7 Piles
12 Haw preceder
13 Nabokov novel
14 Concur
15 Actor McKellen
16 "Stormy Weather" singer
18 Before
19 Mexican snacks
20 Dog bane
22 Actor Cariou
23 Broadcasts
27 LPs' successors
29 Holiday quaff
31 Secret store
34 Suggest
35 One-celled creature
37 Prohibit
38 Perukes
39 Genetic letters
41 Guffaws
45 Surgery reminders
47 Decorate Easter eggs
48 Newbie
52 Mafia boss
53 Arcade pioneer
54 "Give — break!"
55 Roswell visitors
56 Allude to
57 Gerund suffix
58 Fish eggs

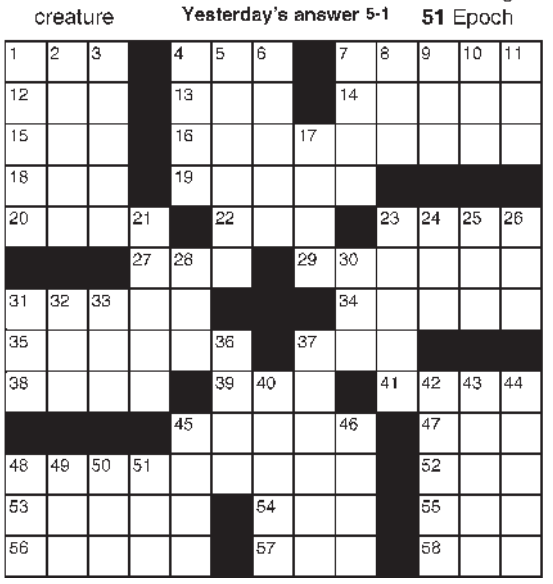
DOWN

1 Main
2 Oyster's prize
3 Soprano Fleming
4 Beer ingredient
5 Paragons
6 Do the tango
7 Scoffing laughs
8 Conceit
9 Schedule abbr.
10 Signing need
11 Observe
17 Top-of-the-line
21 Liniment targets
23 Ecstasy's opposite
24 — and outs
25 King, in Cannes
26 Pvt.'s superior
28 Society newbie
30 Transcript no.
31 Cornfield noise
32 Parisian pal
33 Gear-wheel tooth
36 Eyebrow shape
37 Lacking vegetation
40 Campbell or Watts
42 Milk dispenser
43 Japanese city
44 Feel
45 Tizzy
46 Hose woe
48 Joke
49 Way to go (Abbr.)
50 "Mangia!"
51 Epoch

Solution time: 25 mins.

P	E	W	■	F	L	A	W	■	F	H	E	W
A	T	A	■	L	C	R	I	■	I	O	T	A
W	A	R	Z	O	N	E	S	■	N	E	T	S
■	■	B	A	A	■	S	P	E	E	D	L	P
E	R	U	P	T	S	■	S	S	S	■	■	■
R	E	C	■	S	I	R	■	C	A	P	R	A
I	L	K	S	■	P	O	W	■	H	O	M	■
C	O	S	I	S	■	Y	E	S	■	I	M	P
■	■	■	R	I	M	■	S	P	A	C	E	S
■	E	Z	E	B	E	L	■	O	F	E	■	■
A	S	E	A	■	M	A	N	O	F	W	A	R
M	A	S	K	■	C	M	E	N	■	A	M	I
B	I	I	S	■	S	E	W	S	■	H	A	G

Yesterday's answer 5-1



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Wes Anderson, 51; Tim McGraw, 53; Joanna Lumley, 74; Judy Collins, 81.

Happy Birthday: Keep your life simple and your plans doable. How you structure your finances, spending and promises will determine how well you do mentally and financially. Remaining calm regardless of what's going on around you will help you make better decisions. Working with what you've got will help you control the outcome instead of being at someone else's beck and call. Your numbers are 7, 18, 26, 28, 31, 39, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* You'll make a lasting impression. Set up interviews, discuss your plans with someone you love or help a cause. You will feel good about what you accomplish. A change at home will give you a boost. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take it easy, stay out of the way and don't start something you cannot finish. An emotional disagreement will leave you unsettled. Concentrate on what you have to accomplish instead of the impossible. Avoid emotional spending. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Catch up, finish what you start and refuse to let anyone interfere with your progress. Keep the momentum flowing, and you will reach your target. Make physical fitness, emotional well-being and personal success your priorities. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Jump into the spotlight, and address issues of concern. People will listen and rally behind you if you are passionate about the changes that need to take place. Interacting with like-minded people will lead to good results and new friendships. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Prepare to battle if you share your plans. You'll face opposition that can hold you back. Be sure to have your facts straight and a foolproof plan in place before you initiate your ideas. A physical outlet will ease stress. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Look at all sides of a situation before you make a decision. Take an intelligent approach when dealing with others, and it will help you avoid an unnecessary argument. Rely on intuition and your ability to find out the truth. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Find an outlet that will help you relax and bring you joy. It's best to adapt to inevitable change and carry on with your chores. Get involved in a cause, and it will open up prospects that offer alternatives. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Emotional problems at home will lead to an irreversible change. Keep the peace, be rational and offer alternatives. A partnership will lead to a profitable option. An open mind and a positive attitude will help you seal a deal. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Venture outside your comfort zone to find answers. Trust the facts and figures when dealing with money or people trying to talk you into something questionable. Avoid excessive behavior. Make fitness and health priorities. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* You may want change, but someone will oppose you every step of the way. Do whatever it takes to win over your detractors before you start something new. Be upfront, and you will avoid setbacks. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Be careful who you trust with personal information. Keep busy, and you'll avoid getting drawn into something you don't want to do. Home improvements and self-improvements should be your objectives. Update your image or your living space, and it will lift your spirits. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Greater involvement in a cause or organization will give you the boost you need to explore new options and territory. The connections you make will encourage you to rethink your choices and to walk away from negative influences. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are impulsive, outgoing and emotional. You are smart and persevering.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2			5		6		
6							5	
3			4		8			1
	6			3		1		
5			6		7			3
	7			2		5		
1			9		6			7
	8						3	
		4		8		9		

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 5/01

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

1	2	3	8	6	5	7	4	9
8	5	7	1	9	4	2	6	3
9	6	4	3	2	7	5	8	1
5	4	2	7	1	3	8	9	6
6	1	8	2	5	9	3	7	4
3	7	9	6	4	8	1	5	2
2	8	1	9	7	6	4	3	5
4	3	6	5	8	2	9	1	7
7	9	5	4	3	1	6	2	8

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

HOW ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS YEAR? Solution: 7 letters

H	T	V	T	N	E	M	I	L	P	M	O	C	P	S
A	G	O	Y	N	O	M	R	A	H	F	L	P	E	S
E	E	L	U	G	R	E	E	R	A	C	A	A	A	E
T	N	U	T	R	I	T	I	O	N	I	T	M	C	C
A	S	N	R	A	O	R	G	A	N	I	Z	E	E	C
R	E	T	O	T	Y	W	T	T	A	L	G	S	K	U
O	I	E	P	I	A	T	T	E	N	N	C	I	I	S
C	R	E	S	T	M	E	I	E	I	H	O	C	H	E
E	O	R	E	U	G	N	D	V	O	D	O	R	L	C
D	L	R	S	D	V	R	A	O	I	T	K	E	A	N
I	A	I	U	E	A	S	L	Y	N	T	V	X	N	E
A	C	B	S	G	R	E	A	D	H	A	I	E	R	I
R	S	T	Y	L	I	S	H	U	R	Y	T	S	U	T
Y	E	N	O	M	E	D	I	T	A	T	E	E	O	A
E	Z	I	L	A	I	C	O	S	U	C	O	F	J	P

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Budget, Calm, Calories, Career, Compliment, Cook, Decorate, Diary, Diet, Donate, Exercise, Fame, Focus, Garden, Gratitude, Harmony, Hike, Invest, Journal, Meditate, Money, Music, Nutrition, Organize, Paint, Patience, Peace, Positivity, Read, Saving, School, Sketch, Socialize, Sport, Study, Stylish, Success, Tour, Travel, Volunteer, Water, Yoga

Yesterday's Answer: Vinegars

Jo's Jewels Collector's Edition is back by popular demand. Purchase online at www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

NBA may reopen at Disney World

FLORIDA—In an attempt to crown a champion this season, the NBA is currently brainstorming a scenario that would bring basketball to the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, The Athletic and Stadium's Shams Charania reported Wednesday evening.

This is a very intricate scenario that was actually proposed by Yahoo Sports writer Keith Smith around two weeks ago. To outline some of the main points in said proposal:

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis deemed live professional sports an "essential service" recently, despite a stay-at-home order amid the coronavirus pandemic. This has allowed the WWE to continue its training and taping of live shows, though without live audiences.

One of the main focuses of the NBA has been prioritizing the health of its players if they were to resume play. A key piece in protecting that demand is moving basketball activities to an area secluded from possible public interaction. Walt Disney World operates as a private property, thus allowing them to take a leg up on other proposed destinations like Las Vegas, Atlantic City, N.J., and Nassau, Bahamas. This reality creates a "bubble" for teams, players and staff to live in—not only is the ESPN World Wide of Sports complex at the Disney resort private, but the immediate surrounding areas as well, which includes several hospitals and hotels.

Amongst other positive attributes of this location, like state-of-the-art basketball facilities that offer more than 12 courts for simultaneous play, luxury hotels, and housing that offers 4,900 rooms over just two of the resorts, is that the NBA and Disney have held a very lucrative relationship for many years now. ESPN, which is owned by Disney, is one of the league's main broadcast partners. Also, they've partnered to open The NBA Experience at Disney Springs, considered an all-encompassing NBA attraction.

Shams also reported that Disney has "already offered up their property for use as the NBA sees fit, once players and the league decide it is safe from the coronavirus pandemic."

Before the NBA can get to any return timetable or location, it still needs to overcome hurdles that arise in testing, the virus itself, and other medical components.

The waiting game continues.

In this March 6, 2020 file photo, Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James, right, tries to get past Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo during the second half of an NBA game in Los Angeles. The NBA is brainstorming a scenario that would bring basketball to the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando. AP

Over 200 early-entry candidates for draft

NEW YORK—The NBA has informed its teams that 205 players have filed to enter the 2020 NBA draft as early-entry candidates. The group reportedly includes 163 college underclassmen and 42 international players.

The 205 players will be vying to be selected in a draft that has only 60 slots.

As big as that number might seem, it's actually down from the past two years, with 233 players tested the draft waters in 2019 and 236 in 2018. The smaller group could be chalked up to uncertainty around the draft process due to the coronavirus pandemic.

It's easy to chalk up such an overflow to dozens of delusional players thinking they're NBA material, but that is rarely the case.

Many players are entering the draft to get feedback from NBA teams, then return to college knowing what to work on to improve their future draft stock. They could also want to communicate with teams about their current evaluations, and return to school if it wasn't what they were hoping.

The 2019 draft saw 89 players pull out of draft consideration and return to college. Players lose nothing by doing this, and gain valuable information from NBA teams.

Other players could be perfectly fine with going undrafted and competing for a spot in the NBA through summer league and training camps, or land in foreign leagues if the NBA doesn't work out. Just as long as they can start getting paid for their services. Why not check to see if any NBA teams are interested before signing elsewhere?

Entering the draft is an enormous, life-altering decision that almost always comes after lengthy discussions with coaches and family members. It's not something that players do on a whim.

Players that have applied to enter the draft may withdraw and preserve their college eligibility, as long as they do it by June 3. The NCAA will reportedly be "flexible" with that date due to the chaos that the pandemic is likely to wreak on the pre-draft process.

While the NBA is still operating on its usual pre-draft schedule, that could soon have to change.

The coronavirus pandemic will likely prevent teams from being able to meet with and evaluate their desired prospects in person, and could lead to either a postponement or significant modification of the draft and related activities.

The NBA indicated such measures are still on the table in its memo to teams.

The memo to teams also said, "The league office continues to evaluate potential modifications to the pre-draft process, including the draft combine, as a result of the evolving COVID-19 situation. We will provide teams with updated information as it becomes available."

The NFL, facing similar conditions, opted to go ahead with its draft as scheduled last week. The virtual draft, with teams and players joining in remotely from their own homes, was widely seen as technological success. It was a success in the ratings department as well.

However, the NBA would face significantly more obstacles if it tried to follow the NFL's example. The NFL was able to get an entire college football season of tape, hold its scouting combine as planned and had ample time for teams to meet and evaluate players in person. Meanwhile, the NBA would be working off an incomplete college basketball season and likely unable to hold its scouting combine, currently scheduled for May 21.

It has been reported that teams have encouraged NBA commissioner Adam Silver's office to postpone the draft from June 25 to no sooner than Aug. 1. Even that August date would be extremely optimistic, as front offices would be loath to go through the draft process while the season is still up in the air or in progress.

Meanwhile, Creighton forward Damien Jefferson has declared for the NBA draft, becoming the third player for the Bluejays to explore the possibility of turning professional.

He started 29 games in his junior season and averaged 9.4 points and 5.5 rebounds. He shot 59.9 percent from the floor in Big East games to rank fourth in the conference.

Teammates Ty-Shon Alexander and Denzel Mahoney also declared for the draft. Alexander has said he intends to remain in the draft, while Mahoney is undecided. ***(NBC)***

Knicks GM stays

Scott Perry will remain general manager of the New York Knicks after agreeing to a new one-year deal with the team Wednesday.

Perry ran the team's basketball operations after Steve Mills was fired as president in February. Longtime player agent Leon Rose was hired to replace Mills on March 2, shortly before the NBA season was suspended because of the virus outbreak.

Rose decided that his first big move would be to keep Perry for next season. The Knicks and Perry had a mutual option on his contract that needed to be decided by May 1.

"Scott is a well-respected basketball executive who I have known for more than 20 years, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with him as we look to build a winning team in New York," Rose said in a statement.

Perry, who was hired by the Knicks on July 14, 2017, lasted through a turbulent season of change that included the firing of coach David Fizdale early in the season and later the ouster of Mills. He guided the team through the NBA's trade deadline, dealing veteran forward Marcus Morris to the Los Angeles Clippers.

Rose will still have to make decisions on interim coach Mike Miller and other members of the Knicks front office.

The Knicks were 21-45 when the season was put on hold because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Meanwhile, the 2014-15 NBA season always will have a special place in the hearts of Warriors players, fans and personnel. Golden State took down LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers in the Finals, giving the Warriors their first championship since moving to the Bay Area.

Some (most) things are bigger than basketball, though, and Warriors co-owner showed that by auctioning off his 2015 championship ring for coronavirus relief. The bidding was part of Fanatics' "All-In Challenge."

Bidding for Guber's ring began at $50,000 and ended at $80,000 on Tuesday night. The ring first was appraised for $13,000.

"I was asked if I was willing to give up something that really meant something to me that would be valuable," Guber said. "I thought about it. I didn't want to give up my first Oscar. But winning the NBA championship, that first ring, which was the one I wore, I thought, 'OK. This means a lot to me.' That was it. So, hopefully somebody else would cherish it and put money in that would give a lot to some people that really, really, really need it." ***(NBC)***

Rodgers 'surprised' by Packers' decision to take Love

WISCONSIN (AP)—Former Packers quarterback Brett Favre says Aaron Rodgers was surprised by Green Bay's decision to draft a quarterback in the first round.

Favre said Wednesday on "The Rich Eisen Show" that he had spoken with Rodgers since the Packers traded up four spots in the first round to take Utah State's Jordan Love with the 26th overall pick in the draft Thursday.

"I'm not going to talk about all that we talked about, but he was, let's just say, surprised that they went in that direction," Favre said.

Favre also told Eisen that "my gut tells me" Rodgers won't finish his career in Green Bay. Rodgers, a two-time MVP, has four years remaining on his contract.

"I think maybe two years from now they reassess what the future is and Aaron may be reassessing where he wants to play," Favre said.

The selection of Love came 15 years after the Packers drafted Rodgers at No. 24 overall when they already had one of the game's top quarterbacks in Favre. Rodgers spent three seasons as a backup quarterback before becoming the Packers' starter in 2008, leading to Favre's exit from Green Bay.

Favre was 35 but had been discussing the possibility of retirement at the time the Packers drafted Rodgers, who is now 36.

The Packers declined to respond to Favre's comments.

Green Bay general manager Brian Gutekunst called Rodgers "the best quarterback in the National Football League" the night the Packers drafted Love. Gutekunst continued to emphasize later that week that Rodgers was the team's quarterback for the foreseeable future.

AP

The Aaron Rodgers-led Green Bay Packers selected Utah State quarterback Jordan Love, left, in last week's NFL draft. Former Packers quarterback Brett Favre says Rodgers was surprised by Green Bay's decision to draft a quarterback in the first round.

Gutekunst said the importance of the quarterback position caused him to pursue Love.

"We have one of the best quarterbacks to ever lace them up, and we're shooting for championships as long as he's here," Gutekunst said Saturday. "We expect him to be here for quite a while. Jordan's got a lot to learn. He's got a lot to go. We like him a lot. If we didn't like him a lot, we wouldn't have done it. The importance of that position to our franchise is something to me that can't be overlooked."

Favre said Gutekunst should have reached out to Rodgers and let him know that the quarterback's input was valuable. Gutekunst said in his Thursday night conference call that he hadn't yet reached out with Rodgers, but said Friday night the two of them had since spoken. While Gutekunst declined to discuss the specifics of the conversation, he called Rodgers a "true pro."

"I think that (the Packers) burned a bridge that's going to be hard to overcome," Favre told Eisen. "At some point, I think it will rear its ugly head."

'Quarterback South'

Dan Quinn says the NFC South has earned a new moniker.

The Atlanta Falcons coach notes the division "is turning into Quarterback South."

Tom Brady's arrival has raised the stakes.

"I think in this division, you had better be ready to bring it," Quinn said.

The priority to "bring it" on defense was evident in the NFL draft, as shock waves from Brady's move from New England to Tampa Bay were felt throughout the division. The quarterback standards in the division are exceptionally high.

When Brady signed with the Buccaneers, the NFC South owned three of the top 10 passing leaders in NFL history. Drew Brees of three-time defending division champion New Orleans is No. 1. Brady has the second-most yards. Atlanta's Matt Ryan is No. 10.

"I think it makes the whole division even more competitive than it already is," Quinn said. "... I think it just adds to a strength of what I already thought was a strong division."

Carolina became the first team in the common draft era to use all of its draft picks on defensive players. Atlanta added defensive help with four of its six picks. After Carolina took Auburn defensive tackle Derrick Brown in the first round, Atlanta grabbed Brown's partner on the defensive front, Marlon Davidson, in the second round. Each will be chasing Brady and Brees.

Winston showing signs of maturity

In New Orleans, the reeducation of Jameis Winston is beginning with the Saints.

For now, the 2013 Heisman Trophy winner, 2015 top NFL draft choice and mercurial five-year starting quarterback for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers resembles an eager, enthusiastic and even humble student.

"Everyone needs those humble experiences," said Winston, who in March saw his first NFL employer unceremoniously let him walk in free agency and replace him Brady. "It's another chapter in my life that I'm going to learn from."

Winston, who agreed to a one-year, $1.1 million contract with the Saints this week, hasn't always been known for making the wisest choices.

There have been risky throws that resulted in an NFL-high 30 interceptions last season, as well as behavior off the field that resulted in a three-game suspension the season before that.

Now, Winston says he's sacrificed opportunities to earn more money and a starting job in order to gain wisdom about football, leadership and professionalism from Brees and offensive-minded coach Sean Payton.

Fake injury, glitches: Tennis event tries COVID gaming

NEW YORK (AP)—So here's a dose of realism—or surrealism—for the first video game tournament of the coronavirus pandemic involving professional tennis players: A match supposedly was postponed Monday because of Rafael Nadal's balky back, except the tournament director later admitted he was just kidding.

That bit of silliness from Day 1 at the controller-instead-of-racket Madrid Open came 24 hours after another pro, Gael Monfils, really did withdraw because of ties to a streaming service not involved in this virtual venture.

Add those bizarre developments to technical glitches, some odd announcing and plenty of enthusiasm from the participants—including a particularly creative Belinda Bencic, the 2019 U.S. Open semifinalist who posted a video of herself entering a living room to the strains of "I Love Rock 'n' Roll"—as tennis joined the move to gaming for a sports world largely on hold during the COVID-19 outbreak.

"I don't know when it's going to be over, this nightmare, because it's been really long already, and it feels like it's never going to be over," said Feliciano Lopez, a pro who's been ranked in the top 20 in singles and doubles and now oversees the Madrid Open.

The real clay-court tuneup for the French Open was supposed to be played May 1-10. But it is among more than 30 tournaments canceled or postponed because tennis tours are suspended until at least mid-July. Wimbledon was called off for the first time in 75 years.

"The first thing when we started working on this project was to give the fans something that they don't have right now," Lopez said.

It was Lopez who earnestly (well, seemingly earnestly) said Monday he got a text from Nadal explaining "he was really worried about the injury" to his back and wanted to put off a match. There was zero indication at the time that this was an attempt at humor.

But later, Lopez wrote on Twitter: "Guys, I was joking of, course."

There are 16 women and 16 men in the four-day pretend Madrid event, including 19-time Grand Slam champion Nadal, three-time major winner Andy Murray and former No. 1 women Caroline Wozniacki—who retired from the tour in January— Angelique Kerber and Karolina Pliskova. A combined 300,000 euros (about $325,000) in prize money is available, with the champs deciding how much to donate to tennis players having a hard time financially now. An additional 50,000 euros (about $55,000) is going to virus-related charity.

There's a round-robin format, with one-set matches up to just 3 games, and tiebreakers at 3-all. Each match lasts about 10 minutes.

Viewers can watch streams available with English and Spanish commentary, which sometimes drowns out the players, who can be seen and heard via picture-in-picture boxes.

Diego Schwartzman, who won twice Monday, acknowledged practicing "for a few days"—and also acknowledged that "I'm not really good at this game."

The No. 8-ranked Bencic provided the highlight. The 23-year-old from Switzerland walked up a stairway decked out full tennis regalia, replete with a white visor, and lugged a racket bag that she unzipped to grab a game controller.

There were some hiccups with Monday's stream, interrupting matches or interviews.

"It was a little bit 'laggy' on my side," said Shapovalov, a 21-year-old from Canada currently ranked 16th. "It seemed like the internet wasn't great."

A minute or so into Friday's tournament draw, a co-host on the English feed apologized after sitting around in silence. There were more apologies from that day's announcers, including for not knowing how to pronounce players' names properly—not even close on some—and for not really knowing much at all about real professional tennis.

Then again, none of this has anything at all to do with real tennis, of course.

‘IOC can’t go on forever postponing Olympics’

AP

In this March 3, 2020, file photo, the New National Stadium, a venue for the opening and closing ceremonies at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, is seen from Shibuya Sky observation deck in Tokyo. The Tokyo Olympics were postponed, but there are still more questions than answers about the new opening on July 23, 2021 and what form those games will take.

LONDON (AP)—World Athletics president Sebastian Coe is worried that the delayed Tokyo Olympics could still be in jeopardy unless the coronavirus pandemic can be contained by next year.

The Summer Games have already been moved by a year to July 2021 as the world tries to limit the spread of COVID-19.

“I think it’s pretty clear, though, that you couldn’t go on forever postponing an Olympic Games,” Coe, who helped organize the 2012 London Olympics, said in an interview on Wednesday. “There comes a point where you do have to start posing questions. I hope we’re a little way off that yet.”

IOC president Thomas Bach and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said last month when the delay was announced that the Tokyo Games would not be held beyond the summer of 2021.

And Japan Medical Association president Yoshitake Yokokura said Tuesday it would be difficult to hold the Olympics unless effective vaccines are developed.

“I’m really genuinely hoping that the pandemic will have been curtailed,” Coe said. “I don’t know enough to even speculate about vaccines. ... Forget the Olympic Games at the moment, I’m sure that’s what most medical teams inside governments are trying to grapple with at the moment.”

The Olympics being postponed led to the world track championships in Eugene, Oregon being rescheduled for August 2022. It will be staged after the Commonwealth Games in the English city of Birmingham.

“To have all that in one summer ... it’s a headache,” Coe said.

A more immediate concern is finding a way for this year’s track season to get underway, with Diamond League meets postponed.

“The ambition is to get the athletes back into competition as soon as we possibly can but only when it is safe to do so,” Coe said. “If it’s not safe you can’t put them at risk. You shouldn’t actually be putting those communities that you want to be enjoying the sport at risk as well.

“So at the moment it’s really trying to create some structures that with best endeavors we’re able to fulfil, but I don’t think any of us really know what the next few months is really going to look like. The one advantage we have actually is at this stage being an individual sport. We can organize things where you don’t actually need 22 people on a pitch.”

Vaccine not needed

In Sydney, the head of the IOC’s coordination commission for the Tokyo Olympics said Wednesday he disagrees with suggestions by some scientists and doctors that a vaccine for COVID-19 is needed to hold the games.

John Coates, an International Olympic Committee member from Australia who is a lawyer, said he had seen the opinion but didn’t agree.

“The advice we’re getting from WHO (World Health Organization) says we should continue to plan for this date and that is what we’re doing, and that’s not contingent on a vaccine,” Coates told the Australian Associated Press. “A vaccine would be nice. But we will just continue to be guided by WHO and the Japanese health authorities.”

On Tuesday, Japan Medical Association president Yoshitake Yokokura said it would only be possible for the Olympics to go ahead in July 2021 if the infections were under control, not only in Japan, but globally.

“In my view, it would be difficult to hold the Olympics unless effective vaccines are developed,” Yokokura said.

Coates offered no details how 11,000 Olympians and 4,400 Paralympians from more than 200 nations and territories could safely enter—and exit—Japan without spreading the virus. They would be housed together in the Athletes Village.

They would also be accompanied by thousands of staff members and coaches, and thousands more technical officials who have to run the events. Add to this thousands of world broadcasters, who pay billions for the rights to the Olympics — a critical element, particularly if the Olympics are held with limited numbers of spectators.

Coates said a lot of work had been done since the postponement and the target was still to have 43 venues for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

Coates was speaking in Australia a day after Yokokura told a video media conference of his concerns.

Devi Sridhar, a professor of Global Health at the University of Edinburgh, also said holding the Olympics may depend on finding a vaccine. The same could apply to the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

According to Johns Hopkins University data on Wednesday, Japan had reported about 13,700 cases of COVID-19 with 394 deaths.

When the delay was announced last month, IOC President Thomas Bach and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe decided the Tokyo Games would not be held beyond the summer of 2021.

RIDING

From Page 24

still exercise and take care of ourselves,” Suba said.

“Of course, when we do go out, we observe social distancing. It’s also good to have one or two riders with you for safety, but still maintain your distance with each other and distance with the cars passing by,” he added.

Both Suba and Sitchon believe that Saipan riders are lucky to have bike routes that are not only pleasing to the eye, but are also much safer because of their locations (up north), which are not crowded.

PADDLERS

From Page 24

Andrew said.

The last time SPC had an event was in March when its adult members assisted organizers of the 2019-2020 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series. The club’s junior paddlers, on the other hand, suited up for the three participating teams—Marianas High School, Kagman High School, and Saipan Southern High School.

Meanwhile, Andrew, who is also an official with the Northern Marianas National Paddle Federation, calls on their members to continue following the government’s guidelines on preventing the spread of the virus.

“The federation encourages its member-clubs to take precautions according to the government’s COVID-19 safety measures until restrictions are lifted and we are safely allowed to return back to normal paddling routines,” Andrew said.

Time is still on the paddlers’ side, as their next big tournament won’t be held until late this year.

“Our next major regional outrigger paddling competition is the Micronesia Cup 2020 in October. We have not gotten any confirmation from host Guam if the event will still be on or cancelled this year,” Andrew said.

SPC joined last year’s Micro Cup in Palau and brought home silver medals in the 1,000m sprints for both men and women’s races and the men and women’s distance events, and bronze in the men’s 500m sprint.

PALAU NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE PHOTO

In this file photo, Saipan Paddling Club members are in a close race with Palau and Guam teams in the men’s 1,000m event in the 2019 Micronesia Cup held in Koror.

NBA may reopen at Disney World

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Paddlers stay in shape and safe

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Saipan Paddling Club members are still navigating the island's lagoon to remain in shape and ready for future races.

SPC president Justin Andrew said that although the club suspended its regular training sessions, their paddlers are still working on their own—on land and in the water.

"SPC members are individually making sacrifices and commitments to stay in paddling physical condition by doing cardiovascular workouts and other safe land- based workouts. They are also paddling one-man canoes when possible," Andrew said.

The club's paddlers continue to train while following the government's safety measures against the coronavirus pandemic.

"SPC members are following the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force's directives and are currently practicing all mandated social precautionary measures," Andrew said.

The SPC official added that the group currently has a full crew for its men's, women's, and junior teams (boys and girls) and the club wishes to be back in the water once this crisis is over.

"SPC looks forward to when we can get together and conduct our regular outrigger paddling routines,"

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

In this file photo, Saipan Paddling Club's Joshua Andrew practices with a V-1 canoe in the waters off Kilili Beach. SPC members are training on their own during this COVID-19 pandemic.

PALAU NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE PHOTO

In this file photo, Saipan Paddling Club members make their way to the finish line during the long distance event in the 2019 Micronesia Cup held in Koror, Palau.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Manny Sitchon, left, navigates an uphill road in Marpi during one of the races held before the coronavirus pandemic hit the islands.

Riding bikes responsibly

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Multi-sport athlete Manny Sitchon is thankful that bikers are still allowed to hit the road amid the coronavirus pandemic so he encourages his fellow riders to do it responsibly.

"I usually do solo rides, but there are times that I go out with a small group and when we ride together, we see to it that we observe social distancing," said Sitchon, a frequent participant in biking, swimming, and running events on Saipan.

Sitchon admitted there are a lot of bikers who stopped riding because of the crisis and the government's directive to refrain from having activities that involved more people. The pandemic even forced the postponement of the Tagaman Triathlon plus regular weekly rides have been limited. However, there are also several bikers who manage to continue with their passion while still following safety measures. He said at the start of the pandemic, he and other bikers wore facemask and during stopovers they maintain their distance with each other.

"It's tough to wear a face mask when you are biking because your rhythm and breathing are affected, especially in an uphill road. Even in running it has the same effect," the Tagaman Triathlon and Saipan Marathon participant said.

He added that most of the bikers today are using rear or front lights, especially when they are going out early morning.

"The good thing about having this limited movement of people is the number of vehicles on the road is also minimized, so when we ride, the chances of accidentally colliding with a car is lessened, too," the sexagenarian said.

Enrique Suba, another member of Saipan's bikers community, said having the opportunity to bike amid this pandemic helps him stay active.

"Whether it's biking, walking, jogging, or any type of outdoor activities, I appreciate that the government still allows us to do them so we can

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